

# رسالَةُ الْمُدَّاكَةِ

مَعَ الإِخْوَانِ الْمُحِبِّينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْخَيْرِ وَالدِّينِ

## A TREATY OF MUTUAL COUNSELLING

BETWEEN LOVING BROTHERS  
THOSE WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS AND RELIGIOUS

Imam al-Haddad

*al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini*  
*May Allah, the Exalted Have Mercy Upon Him*



For those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out,  
He provides for him From (sources) he never could imagine.

If anyone puts his trust in Allah, Sufficient is (Allah) for him.  
For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose:  
Verily, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion

For those who fear Allah, He will make their path easy.  
That, is the Command of Allah, Which He has sent down to you:  
If anyone fears Allah, He will remove his ills from him,  
And will enlarge his reward.

*Surah 65 at Talaq Part of Verses 2-3 and 4-5*



ISBN: 978 – 981 – 07 – 3852 – 5  
Maqam Imam Al-Haddad

A TREATY OF MUTUAL COUNSELLING

Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad

مقام الإمام الحداد  
تَرَيمٌ الْحَاوِي  
بِي دَلَالِ الْمُسْلِمِ فَشْكَرِي ١٤٩٤ هـ

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

# رسالة المذاكرة

مع الإخوان المحبين من أهل الحَيْر والَّذِين

## A Treaty of Mutual Counselling

Between Loving Brothers  
Those who are Righteous and Religious

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al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini

May Allah, the Exalted Have Mercy Upon Him

Door Photo

## لِقَامُ الْأَعْمَامِ الْحَرَادِ

تَرَيمٌ  
الحاوي  
بِشَفَاعَةِ مَلِكٍ  
لِنَجْسِي وَلِالْأَسْوَى فَوْسَكْرِي  
١٤٥٩ هـ

An English Translation

# رسالة المذاكرة

مع الأخوان المحبين من أهل الخير والدين

لإمام شيخ الإسلام قطب الدعوة والإرشاد

الحبيب عبد الله بن علوي الحداد

الحضرمي الشافعي الحسيني

رحمه الله تعالى

Front Cover showing the restored front door entrance to  
Imam al-Haddad House in Hawi Tarim Hadhramaut Yemen

# A Treaty of Mutual Counselling

## Between Loving Brothers

## Those who are Righteous and Religious

By the Imam, al-Sheikh of Islam,  
the Pivot of Dakwah, the Guiding Light  
the Beloved Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad  
al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini

May Allah, the Exalted have mercy upon him

An English Translation

Imam Al-Haddad's manuscripts  
were recompiled into books by  
Habib Ali bin Isa bin Abdulkader  
Al-Haddad. Subsequently,  
they were re-edited, reprinted,  
translated and distributed by  
various inspired parties.

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Maqam Imam Alhadad  
Charity of Habib Esa bin Abdulkader bin Ahmad Alhadad

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## A Short Biography of Imam Al-Haddad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

He is Al-Imam Al-Habib Abdullah bin Alawi Bin Muhammad Al-Haddad, the famous Imam, the Shaykh of Islam, the foremost of the people unification, the noble descendant of the Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, a descendant of Al-Imam Hussein, may Allah be pleased with him the Shaykh Abdullah ibn Alawi Al-Haddad Al-Alawi, may Allah reward him for us with the best rewards He gives those of His people who guide us to Him.

He was born in Subair, a small suburb in Tarim, Hadhramaut, South Yemen, on the night 5 Safar 1044 after Hijrah. Tarim was already a centre of the learned *Asyraf* of the descendant of Saiyidina Hussein bin Ali bin Abu Talib. He grew up in an enlightened environment. He was raised and educated there, initially taught by his father, and was never seen to show the recklessness of other children. He lost his eyesight while still young and was granted the power of discernment as compensation. He gathered as he grew, the best of knowledge and spirituality, and became outstanding in knowledge, guidance, calling people to Allah, and being a shaykh in the perfect sense of the word. He was given the title Pole of Guidance [*Qutbul Irshad*] by the greatest of the people of knowledge in his time and after that until today.

Some have said that there were three ranks in calling to Allah, according to whether it was by pen, tongue or foot (travelling). All three combined to perfection in the works of Imam Al-Haddad, may Allah shower His mercy upon him. His books are still in print in Egypt, India, Hijaz, Istanbul, and Java. His fame spread throughout the Muslim world, and his writings, which were base on the Quran and the practices of the Prophet [*Sunnah*] were never criticised nor thought to be controversial.

His roots from the Prophet Muhammad, the messenger of Allah, blessings and peace upon him, from Fatima Az-Zahraa, daughter of Muhammad and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Gate to (The Radiant) the City of Knowledge, may Allah be pleased with him and all his descendants.

Then on from Al-Imam Hussein > Imam Ali Zainal Abidin > Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir > Imam Jaafar As-Saadiq > Imam Ali Al-Uraidi > Imam Muhammad An-Naqib > Isa Ar-Rumi > Ahmad Al-Muhajir illa Allah > Ubaidillah > Alawi > Muhammad > Alawi > Ali Khali' Qassam > Muhammad of Mirbat > Alawi > Abdur Rahman > Ahmad Al-Faqih > Abdullah > Muhammad > Ahmad > Abu Bakr At-Tawil > Ahmad Al-Haddad > Alawi > Muhammad > Abdullah > Ahmad > Muhammad > Alawi > Abdullah Qutbul Irshad

He earnestly sought knowledge, accompanying such scholars as:

1. al-Habib Umar bin Abdul Rahman Al-Attas
2. al-Habib Oukail bin Abdurrahman As-Saqqaf
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Syaikh Aideed
4. al-Habib Sahl Bin Ahmed Bahasan Al-Hadeely Baalwi
5. as-Saeed Muhammad Bin Alwi As-Saqqaf

Amongst his students are:

1. His son, our leader al-Habib Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Haddad.
2. al-Habib Ahmad bin Zain Al-Habshee
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Abdullah Bilfaqeheh
4. al-Habib Muhammad bin Zain bin Semait
5. al-Habib Umar bin Zain bin Semait
6. al-Habib Umar bin Abdurrahman Al-Bar
7. al-Habib Ali bin Abdullah bin Abdurrahman As-Saqqaf
8. al-Habib Muhammad bin Umar bin Taha As-Safi As-Saqqaf  
and many others.

It seems as he was selected to carry out the mission of *dakwah* for Islam and spiritual guidance using wit and wisdom. People eventually entirely attended to him, and his name has become popular.

People from different fields of life benefited from his books, preaches and guidance. His missions received people's approval and love. His publications have been translated into English, Malay, French and other languages. He passed away on the evening of Tuesday, 7 *Dzulqaedah* 1132 Hijrah and was buried in a simple grave at the graveyard of Zanbal in Tarim. May Allah show mercy on him and reward him abundantly.

His publications are distinctively popular among the old and young then and till now. They include the following:

١. النصائح الدينية والوصايا الإيمانية.

*An Nasaih id-Diniyya wal Wasaya al-Imaniyyah.*

1. Sincere Religious Advice and Recommendations of the Iman.

٢. الدعوة الشافية والتذكرة العامة.

*Ad-Da'watut-Taammah wat-Tadhkiratul 'Aammah.*

2. Perfect Summons and General Admonition.

٣. رسالة المعاونة والمظاهرة والمؤازرة للراغبين من المؤمنين في سلوك طريق الآخرة.

*Risalatul Mu'awanah wal Muzhaharah wal Mu'azarah Lir-Raagibeen Minal Mu'mineen Fee Suluki Tariq-al-Akhirah.*

3. The Book of Assistance, Support and Encouragement for Such Believers as Desire to Follow the Way of the Afterlife.

٤. الفصول العلمية والأصول الحكيمية.

*Al-Fusul ul-'Ilmiyyah wal Usul ul-Hikamiyyah.*

4. Knowledge and the Principles of Wisdom.

٥. سِيَلُ الْإِدْكَارِ وَالْإِعْتِبَارِ بِمَا يَمْرُّ بِالْإِنْسَانِ وَيَنْقَضُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَعْمَارِ.  
*Sabilul-Iddhikaar wal-I'tibaar Bima Yamurru bil-Insan Wa Yanqadhee Lahu Minal A'maar.*
5. The Way to Remember and Learn from the Lives of Man that Wane and Perish.
٦. رِسَالَةُ الْمُذَاكِرَةِ مَعَ الْإِخْوَانِ الْمُحِبِّينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْحَيْرِ وَالْدِّينِ.  
*Risalatul Muzhaakarah Ma'al-Ikhwaanil-Muhibbeen Min Ahlil Khayr Waddeen.*
6. A Discussion Among Brothers and the Loved Ones From Among the Righteous in Good Deeds and Faith.
٧. رِسَالَةُ آدَابِ سُلُوكِ الْمُرِيدِ.  
*Risalatu Aadaabi Suluk il-Murid.*
7. The Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker.
٨. كِتَابُ الْحِكْمَمِ.  
*Kitaabul Hikam.*
8. Book of Wisdom.
٩. النَّفَائِسُ الْعَلَوِيَّةُ فِي الْمُسَائِلِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ.  
*An-Nafaais-il Alawiyyah fil Masaail-as-Sufiyah.*
9. The Gems of the Alawiyya Concerning Sufism.
١٠. إِنْجَافُ السَّائِلِ بِجَوابِ الْمَسَائِلِ.  
*Ithaaf is-Saail bi-Jawabil Masaail.*
10. The Gifts for the Seeker Being Some Answered Questions.
١١. الْوَصَائِيَا النَّافِعَةُ.  
*Al Wasaya an-nafi'ah.*
11. Beneficial Religious Counsels.

١٢ . وَسِيَّلَةُ الْعِبَادِ إِلَى رَأْدِ الْمَعَادِ.

*Waseelatul Ibaad Ilaa Zaadil Ma'aad.*

12. A Means for People to Provide for the Hereafter. (A Compilation of the Imam Azkaar and Awraad, including *Wird Latif*, *Wird Kabir*, *Ratib al-Shahir*, *Hizbul-Fath* and *Hizbun-Nasr* by Habib Muhamad bin Alawi Al- Haddad).

١٣ . الدُّرُّ الْمَنْظُومُ لِذَوِي الْعُقُولِ وَالْفُهُومِ.

*Ad-Durrul Mandhum Li zawil 'Uqul Wal Fuhum.*

13. Poetic Pearls for Discerning and Understanding Minds and this is his *Diwan*, the best of his *Qaseedas*.

١٤ . تَبْيَثُ الْفُؤَادُ - بِذِكْرِ كَلْمَ مَجَالِسٍ.

*Tathbitul fu'ad bizikir kalam majilis.*

14. Affirming of the Hearts - with Remembrance of the Speeches at Majlis Volume I and Volume II.

١٥ . مُكَاتَبَاتُ الْإِمَامِ الْحَدَّادِ.

*Mukatibat Al-Imam Al-Haddad.*

15. Correspondences of Imam Al-Haddad.

Most of Imam Al-Haddad's manuscripts were recompiled by Habib Ali bin Isa bin Abdulkader Al-Haddad, who was born in Singapore and educated in Tarim. They were subsequently re-edited, reprinted, translated and distributed by various inspired parties.

Scholars, as well as the laymen, so highly admired the works that they would read them repeatedly. These scholarly works have also been described as a summary of the quintessence of Scholar Ghazali's literature and eventually indispensable as being brief, but comprehensive.

# Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Infinitely Merciful, the Compassionate.  
سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ.

Glory to You, we have no knowledge, save what You has taught us: In truth, it is You Who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom<sup>1</sup>. All praise and thanks belong to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds<sup>2</sup>. Who began the creation of man from nothing more than clay, then made his progeny from the extraction of mean fluid and made his progeny from the quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised<sup>3</sup>.

He separated the believers who practice mutual teaching of the truth and patience (from those who are lost and do not believe) from among humankind<sup>4</sup>.

He commanded His believing servants to assist each other in benevolence and mindful of their duties to Allah [taqwa] and announced that the most honourable of man in His sight are those who are most cognizant of their duties to him [taqwa].

Indeed, He is the protector of the god-fearing, and that He created jinn and humankind for nothing other than to worship and serve him<sup>5</sup>, and that He did not command them to chase after worldly affairs and accumulate wealth. But instead, He had reminded them via his trustworthy messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him who said,

---

<sup>1</sup> Surah 2 Al Baqarah Verse 32.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 1 Al Fateha Verse 2.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 32 As Sajadah Verse 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Surah 103 Al Asr Verses 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Surah 51 Ad Dhariyah Verse 56.

مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنْ اجْمَعَ الْمَالَ وَكُنْ مِنَ التَّاجِرِينَ وَلَكِنْ أَنْ سَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ.

“It was not revealed to me to accumulate wealth and be a merchant, but rather to “glorify your Lord with praises and thanks and be of those who prostrate themselves, and worship your Lord until the Hour come to you, that is Certain!”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the true happiness of the individual and its perfection is found in obedience to Allah’s divine command and that for which humanity was created. So one has to create time to execute this divine command and devote oneself to it by severing everything that holds back or thwarts one from it, whether they are deviations of deceived fools or the absurdities of the dull indolent.

May Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, the Leader of all the Messengers and the Seal of all the Prophets, whom Allah sent as a mercy to the worlds, and upon his family, Companions, and those who follow them with excellence until the Day of Judgment. After that:

That which comprehends all goodness and serves as its foundations is to be mindful of one’s duties to Allah, the Exalted, [taqwa] in private and in public, secretly and openly.

*Taqwa*<sup>2</sup> [the fear of Allah] is the attribute which gathers for its possessor the good of this world and the next. Because of its importance in religion and its value in the eyes of the leading learned and scholars, they make it a point to include in their counsels and efforts to call upon the people to Allah by reminding them of minding their duties to Allah and fear Him. Because it [*taqwa*] comprehends all goodness, it suffices as the obligatory counsel that must be included in the Friday Prayer sermon [*Khutbah*]. In most matters, it is common that the leading learned would confine their advice to urging upon them the fear of Allah when people request from them, formal counsel.

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 15 Al-Hijr Verses 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> *Taqwa* means to fear Allah and thus be mindful of all of one’s duties to Him.

*Taqwa* is also advised by Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, to the first and the last of His servants. Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيَنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تَقْفُوا اللَّهَ.

“Verily we have directed the People of the Book before you, and you (O Muslims) to fear Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

In it is a command to *taqwa*, Allah the Exalted says,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ.

“O humankind! Reverence your Lord, who created you from a single person.”<sup>2</sup>

And Allah Glorious is He, says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا.

“O you who believe! Fear and be mindful of your duties to Allah, and always say a word directed to the Right”.<sup>3</sup>

And Allah Exalted is He, says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُعَاتِهِ.

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared.”<sup>4</sup>

The Exalted says,

“So fear Allah as much as you can.”<sup>5</sup>

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا إِسْتَطَعْتُمْ.

The verse means to make every effort to schedule a time for our duties on toward Him and fear Allah. Allah, the Exalted says,

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَعْسًا إِلَّا مَاءِاتُهَا.

“Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him.”<sup>6</sup>

There are many more verses enjoining the fear of Allah.

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 4 An-Nisa'a Verse 131.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 4 An-Nisa'a Verse 1.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 33 Al-Ahzab Verse 70.

<sup>4</sup> Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 103.

<sup>5</sup> Surah 64 at-Taghabun Verse 16.

<sup>6</sup> Surah 65 at-Talaq Verse 7.

Indeed, Allah, the Exalted had present together with the good of this world and the hereafter for those who fear Him. Some of these are relief from hardship and bestow of the provision from when one does not expect.

Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَمَنْ يَتَقَّى اللَّهُ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا. وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ.

“And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out, and He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine.”<sup>1</sup>

### Right Guidance

Allah Exalted is He says,

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَبَّ فِيهِ هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“This is the Book, without doubt, in it is guidance to those who fear Allah.”<sup>2</sup>

### Knowledge

Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ.

“So fear Allah; For it is Allah that teaches you.”<sup>3</sup>

### Discernment, Expiation of Bad Actions, and Forgiveness of Sins

Allah, Glorious and Exalted is He, says,

إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ.

“If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong), remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you, and forgive you.”<sup>4</sup>

Certain commentators have stated that criterion is guidance in the heart which discriminates between truth and falsehood.

<sup>1</sup> Surah 65 at-Talaq Verses 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 2.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 282.

<sup>4</sup> Surah 8 al-Anfaal Verse 29.

## Protection

Allah Exalted is He says,

وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُ الْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Allah is the protector of the god-fearing (righteous).”<sup>1</sup>

## Being with Allah

Allah Exalted is He says,

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ.

“And know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves (because they fear Allah).”<sup>2</sup>

The above verse means that Allah is his support, sustenance, and protection, salvation and deliverance;

Allah Exalted is He says,

ثُمَّ نُنَحِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا.

“But We shall save those (god-fearing) who guarded against evil.”<sup>3</sup>

## The Promise of Paradise

Allah, All-Mighty and August is the Speaker, says

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ، فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ عَيْرٌ آسِنٌ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَّنٍ لَمْ يَتَعَيَّنْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ حَمْرٍ لَدَدٌ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفَّى.

“(Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous (Allah-fearing) are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear.”<sup>4</sup>

And He, Glorious is He says,

<sup>1</sup> Surah 45 al-Jaathiya Verse 19

<sup>2</sup> Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 194, the verse refers to the prohibited months and restraining transgress during that period due to god-fearing and mindful of one's duties to Allah.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 19 Maryam Verse 72

<sup>4</sup> Surah 47 Muhammad Verse 15

وَأَزْلَقْتِ الْجَنَّةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عَيْرٌ بَعِيدٌ.

“And the Garden will be brought near to the Righteous (god-fearing), no more a thing distant.”<sup>1</sup>

There are other beautiful and useful things, immense favours and generous gifts promised to the god-fearing. It is sufficient honour concerning *taqwa* that Allah the Exalted mentions it more than ninety times in his book. As for urging *taqwa* and its merits, the messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْخَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقِ حَسَنٍ.

“Fear Allah wherever you are, follow a bad deed with a good one, and it shall erase it, and behave toward people in a gracious manner.”

He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him also said,

أُوصِّيْكُمْ بِتَشْوِيْ اللهِ وَالسَّمَعَ وَالطَّاعَةَ، وَإِنْ تَأْمَرُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدُ جَبَشِيْ.

“I enjoin upon you to obey and fear of Allah, to hear and obey, even if given as your ruler a (black) slave<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup>”

He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him also said,

إِتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشَقِّ تَمْرَةِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِي كُلَّمَةٍ طَيِّبَةً.

“Fear Hellfire,<sup>3</sup> even with a charity of half a date. If you do not even possess that then with a gracious word.”

He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him would frequently recite this invocation,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالْتُّقْيَى وَالْعَفَافَ وَالْغُفَافِ.

“O Lord, I ask of you guidance, Allah-fearing [*taqwa*], continence, and freedom from needs!”

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him also said,

<sup>1</sup> Surah 50 Qaf Verse 51

<sup>2</sup> In the context of that period of time, it is unthinkable for Quraish to obey or have a black slave as a leader!

<sup>3</sup> This means to obey Allah, the Exalted.

لَا فَضْلَ لِأَبْيَضٍ عَلَى أَسْوَدٍ وَلَا لِعَرَبٍ عَلَى عَجَمٍ إِلَّا بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، أَنْتُمْ مِنْ آدَمَ وَآدَمُ  
مِنْ تَرَابٍ.

“There is no superiority for a white man over a black man, nor an Arab over a non-Arab, except the fear of Allah. You are all from Adam and Adam is from dust!”

Someone asked the Messenger of Allah, “Who is the most honourable of people?” He answered, “Those who fear Allah [*tawqa*], and it was narrated that he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said that, “Let only those who fear Allah eat your food and only eat food from those who fear Allah!”

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, “Nothing of this world was pleasing to the Messenger of Allah, and no person was pleasing to him save one who feared Allah.”

Ali, may Allah honour him, said, “The existence of a group of people will never perish if there exist amongst them those who fear Allah.”

Qatada said, “It is written in the Torah, “Fear Allah, then die wherever you wish!”

Al-Amash said, “He whose capital (investment) is the fear of Allah, tongues grow weary in describing his profits.”

Bishr al-Hafi used to recite a poem,

مَوْتُ التَّقِيِّ حَيَاةٌ لَا نَفَادَ لَهَا      قَدْ مَاتَ قَوْمٌ وَهُمْ فِي النَّاسِ أَحْيَاءٌ

“The death of those who fear Allah is endless life.

Some have died but are still among the living.”

The merits of being mindful of one’s duties to Allah and those who possess the fear of Allah [*taqwa*] are beyond enumeration. Imam al-Ghazali has composed quite a lengthy exposition of this in his treatise *Minhaj*, and what we just quoted is extracted from his work.

# Chapter 1

## Defining *Taqwa* The Beginning of the Path

### **Fear of Allah Be Mindful of the Duties to Allah**

Imam al-Ghazali has said that “*Taqwa* in the Quran has three meanings:

The first of which is fear and a sense of awe.

The second includes obedience and worship.

The third is to remove from the heart any inclination to sin, which is the essence and reality of *Taqwa*.

In summary, *taqwa* is to guard oneself against committing actions that cause the wrath of Allah and His punishment; that is by fulfilling His commandments and abstaining from what He has made prohibited. While the reality of *taqwa* is that your Lord should never see you where he has forbidden you to be, nor does He miss you where he has commanded you to be.

## Chapter 2

### The Rewards Recompense of Deeds

Indeed, those who possess sound hearts and upright minds know with certainty that they will be receiving rewards for what they do in this life and that they will reap what they sow. If they commit good deeds, then for them is suitable rewards and their divine acts of worship reap great rewards. Similarly, the opposite is true. If they commit evil and sinful acts, then punishments shall await them.

How can such people not know this or fail to be sure of this when what they believe and trust in, comes from what they hear in the perfect revelation of Allah, the Wise and the utterances [*hadith*] of His prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him! These are the two sources that impart definite conviction and certitude in one whose heart Allah illuminates and whose breast He dilates. So, be present with the heart, attentive of the ear, listen to what may awaken you from your heedlessness and rouse you from your slumber, and then act well for your good, and save yourself. Just as He, the Exalted says,

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بُنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقُلُوبٍ سَلِيمٍ.

“The Day<sup>1</sup> whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail but only he (will prosper) that brings Allah a sound heart.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Day of Judgment.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 26 ash-Shu’raa Verse 88-89

Allah, the Exalted says,

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَعْجِزِي الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَعْجِزِي الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى.

“Yea, to Allah, belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: so that He rewards those who do evil, according to their deeds, and He rewards those who do good, with what is best.”<sup>1</sup>

And Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَأَنَّ لَيْسَ لِإِلَّا سَعْيٌ. وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ. ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءُ الْأَوَّلُ. وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ.

“That man can have nothing but what he strives for; That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight: Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete; That to thy Lord is the final Goal.”<sup>2</sup>

And the Exalted says,

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانَتِكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانَتِ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ، مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَى بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدُ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا.

“Is it not your desires, nor those of the People of the Book that whoever works evil, will be rewarded accordingly? Nor will he find, besides Allah, any protector or helper. If any do deeds of righteousness be they male or female, and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.”<sup>3</sup>

And He, Exalted is He says,

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنْ قَالَ ذَرَّةً حَيْرًا يَرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنْ شَقَالَ ذَرَّةً شَرًّا يَرَهُ.

“Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Surah 53 an-Najm Verse 31.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 53 an-Najm Verses 39-42.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 3 an-Nisaa Verse 123-124.

<sup>4</sup> Surah 99 az-Zalzala Verses 7-8

And He says Exalted is He,

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا، لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ.

“On no soul do Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns.”<sup>1</sup>

And the Exalted says,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَلِحًا فَإِنَّفِسِيهِ، وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا، وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَالٍ لِلْعَيْدِ.

“Whoever works righteousness benefits his soul; whoever works evil, it is against his soul: nor is your Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants.”<sup>2</sup>

And He Exalted is He says,

يَوْمَ تَحْدُدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ حَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوْدُلُوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمْدًا بَعِيدًا، وَيُحَدِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ، وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعَبَادِ.

“On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good, it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Him. And yet Allah is full of kindness to those that serve Him.”<sup>3</sup>

And the Exalted says,

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ، ثُمَّ تُوَقَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُنَّ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ.

“And fear the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then shall every soul be paid what it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.”<sup>4</sup>

The historical record indicated that this was the last verse of the Quran to be revealed. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّ رُوحَ الْفُلُوسِ نَفَثَ فِي رُوعِي: عِشُّ مَا عِشْتَ، فَإِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ، وَأَحِبْ مَا أَحِبْتَ،  
فَإِنَّكَ مُفَارِفٌ، وَاعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ، فَإِنَّكَ مَجْزِيٌّ بِهِ.

<sup>1</sup> Surah 2 Baqara Verse 286.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 46.

<sup>3</sup> Surah ala Imran Verse 30.

<sup>4</sup> Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 281.

“The Holy Spirit (Jibril) whispered into my heart: Live your life as you wish, (sooner or later) you shall die! Love whatever you wish, (soon) you shall be separated from it! Do whatever deeds you may wish, you shall be rewarded for it!”

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْبِرُّ لَا يَبْلِى، وَالذَّنْبُ لَا يُنْسَى، وَالدَّيَانُ لَا يَقْنَى كَمَا تَدِينُ ثُدَّاً.

“Benevolence will not decay, and sins will not be forgotten, (while Allah) the Executor of Judgment will not die. So shall you be judged according to your action.”

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, relates on behalf of his Lord (*Hadith Qdsi*),

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أَخْصِيهَا لَكُمْ، ثُمَّ أُوْقِنُكُمْ إِيَّاهَا. فَمَنْ وَجَدَ حَيْرًا فَلِيُحَمِّدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ.

“O My servants, certainly, those are your deeds that I count for you, then I shall repay you in full for them. Whoever finds good, let him thank and praise Allah, and whoever finds otherwise, let him blame none but himself.”

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا تَسْبُوا الْمَوْتَىٰ فَإِنَّهُمْ قَدْ أَفْضَوْا إِلَى مَا قَدَّمُوا.

“Do not insult the dead, for they had presented (good) deeds that which they acted upon themselves.”

It was related that a slave might be raised to a higher rank and status than his master. Then the master will say, “O Lord! This man was my slave in the world!” Allah, Glorious is He will say, “I have merely rewarded him for his deeds.”

Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “This world is the place of doing good deeds; whereby there are no rewards in it<sup>1</sup>. While the hereafter is the place of rewards, there are no works in the

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning a person cannot physically see the rewards of his good deeds.

hereafter. So, in this world take actions<sup>1</sup> whereby there is no reward for it for the sake of the world where there are no more works!"

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him said, Allah will report to the people of the garden, "Enter the garden through My mercy, dwell therein perpetually by your good intentions, and take your shares of it by the number of your good works!"

All the references that I mentioned indicate the occurrence of recompense in the hereafter were provided as a reminder; as they are otherwise known specifically or generally to everyone, with no exception, they are so well known that even the most ordinary people without knowledge know this.

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<sup>1</sup> The action of good deeds and divine worships to Allah.

## Chapter 3

### Allah's Pleasure and Wrath

#### **Obedience Pleases Allah Disobedience Draws the Wrath of Allah**

Allah has already caused to associate His great pleasure to obedience to Him, and His wrath to disobedience. He also promised those who obey Him admittance into His Garden by His mercy and those who disobey Him to be cast into His Fire according to His justice and His wisdom.

Then Exalted says,

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخَلُهُ جَنَّةً تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ حَالِدِينَ فِيهَا، وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ. وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخَلُهُ نَارًا حَلِيدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ.

“Those are limits set by Allah: those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens with rivers flowing beneath, to abide therein forever and that will be the supreme achievement. But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: And they shall have a humiliating punishment.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verses 13-14

Glorious is He has already commanded His servants, who are believers, to rush in seeking His forgiveness and His Garden, and to protect themselves and their families from the hellfire, by conforming to His commands and avoiding disobedience.

Then the Exalted says,

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous.”<sup>1</sup>

The Exalted also says,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسِ آمِنُوا قُوَّا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُوْنَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمْرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمِرُونَ.

“O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 3 ala-Imran Verse 133

<sup>2</sup> Surah 66 at-Tahrim Verse 6

## Chapter 4

### Recalling Those Whom Allah Honors

#### Those Who Are Obedient to Him And Present Pious Acts of Worship to Him

Allah, the Exalted says,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكْرٍ أَوْ أُنْشَاءٍ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيهِ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً.

“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and is a believer, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure.”<sup>1</sup>

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَحْلِفُنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَحْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا.

“Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that Allah will establish in authority their religion - the one which Allah

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 16 an-Nahl Verse 97.

has chosen for them; and that Allah will change their state, after the fear in which they lived, to one of security and peace.”<sup>1</sup>

The Exalted says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلاً. أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيُبَسُّوْنَ ثِيَابًا حُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْبَرِقٍ مُتَكَبِّرِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ نِعْمَ الشَّوَّابُ وَحَسِنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

“As to those who believe and work righteousness, verily We shall not suffer to perish the reward of any who does a single righteous deed. For righteous there will be Gardens of Eternity; beneath them, rivers will flow; they will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade; they will recline therein on raised thrones. How good the recompense! What a beautiful couch to recline on!”<sup>2</sup>

Then the Exalted says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا.

“On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will Allah the Most Gracious bestow love.”<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with his father and him, commented about this above verse, “Allah will love them the righteous and also cause the believers to love them.”

The Messenger of Allah may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنَتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَعَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمِعْتُهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرْتُهُ الَّذِي يَبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطَشُ بِهَا، وَرَجْلُهُ الَّتِي يَمْسِي بِهَا، وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتُنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لَأُعْيَدَنَّهُ.

<sup>1</sup> Surah 24 an-Nur Verse 55.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 18 al-Kahf Verses 30-31.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 19 ar-Rahman Verse 96.

“I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved acts of worship with which My slave performs to come nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him obligatory [fardu]<sup>1</sup>; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing supererogatory [nawafil]<sup>2</sup> till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My protection refuge, I will protect him; by giving him My refuge.”<sup>3</sup>

Allah has present this great love and honour specifically for His servant who performs the acts which are obligatory upon him, then adds supererogatory acts of pious devotion in abundance to draw nearer to Allah, until such stage that Allah renders his every action as from Himself and his existence for His sake.

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,  
 إِذَا تَقْرَبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي شَبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا، وَإِذَا تَقْرَبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا، تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ بَاعًا،  
 وَإِذَا أَثْنَيْتِ يَمْشِي، أَثْنَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً.

“It was related from Allah, the Exalted, who says, if my servant draws near Me by the span of his palms, I draw near him by the length of a cubit. And when he draws near Me by the length of a cubit, I draw near him by the length of a fathom. And when he draws near Me walking, I rush towards him.”

The servant may draw nearer to his Lord by obedience to Him and performing various pious acts of worship, thus serving Him. The Lord draws nearer to His servant by bestowing His favour and mercy.

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,  
 “It was related from Allah, the Exalted, who says,  
 أَعَدَّتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُدْنُ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا حَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ.

<sup>1</sup> *Fardu* - compulsory acts of worships

<sup>2</sup> *Nawafil* - praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory.

<sup>3</sup> From Sahih Bukhari and narrated by Abu Hurairah, may Allah be please with him.

“I have prepared for My virtuous servants [in paradise] that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has ever imagined.”

In the Psalms [az-Zabur] it is mentioned, “O Son of Adam! Obey Me, and I shall cause your heart to be free of any needs, fill your two hands with the provision and make your body healthy.”

And Allah said to the world, “O world! Whoever serves me, serves him, but whoever serves you, make him your servant!”

Bishr ibn al-Harith, may Allah’s mercy be upon him, said, “Those who perform divine deeds of worship will go (to Heaven) with both this world and the next.”

Yahya ibn Muadh said, “Sons of this world<sup>1</sup> served the slaves, while free men serve sons of the Hereafter<sup>2</sup>. ”

O my brother, if you wish to have a rank [*maqam*] that does not vanish, the eminence that does not diminish, an honorable status that is permanent, and glory that is perpetual, then obey your Lord!

For Allah has placed all these (rank, eminence, honour, and glory) in obedience to Him. He graciously bestows these various statuses of man upon those of His servants who obey Him.

And indeed, Allah has honoured the servants who obeyed Him by freeing them from servitude to their lower desires and appetites, purifying their hearts from the impurity of attending to transient issues of the physical world; presented to their hands supernatural events and unusual wondrous miracles, such as knowledge of the unseen, the abundance of blessings [*barakah*], like answering and granting of their invocations such that people seek their audience for assistance and blessings of their light, and followed in their footsteps, implored Allah to relieve their personal needs (hardship) and intentions, directs their hope in requesting Allah through their rank with him to protect them from harm, beseeched Him by their footprints to fulfil their requests, and sought the blessings [*baraka*] of the dust of their tombs.

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<sup>1</sup> Those who strive to achieve material world.

<sup>2</sup> Those who strive in divine pious worship [*fisabilillah*].

Allah, Glorious is He, had bestowed more blessings upon them more than what was mentioned above. Indeed, Allah has cast of His light into their hearts, filled them with the purest knowledge to know and love Him, so that they felt serene and at peace when remembering Him in private solitude estranged from His creation [*khalwat*], while they feel uneasy in the presence of others. As a reward, Allah prepared for them a permanent bliss in the Abode of Bliss, and promised them to see His Noble countenance- and greater still will be His satisfaction with them.

فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكَ،

“As a Bounty from thy Lord!

ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ.

That will be the supreme achievement!”<sup>1</sup>

لِمِثْلِ هَذَا فَلِيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ.

“For the like of this, let all strive, who wish to strive!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 44 ad-Dukhaan Verse 57.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 37 as-Saffat Verse 61

## Chapter 5

### Abasement of the Corrupt

#### Reminder About Committing Sin and the Result of Debasement in this World and the Hereafter

Allah, the Exalted says,

إِنَّمَا مَن يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُعْبُرًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَخْيَى.

“Verily he who comes to his Lord as a sinner (at Judgment), for him is Hell: therein shall he neither die nor live.”<sup>1</sup>

The Exalted says,

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُوْنَا، سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ.

“Do those who practise evil think that they will get the better of Us? Evil is their judgment!”<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of “better of Us” here is to evade and stand out of reach (of Allah’s Wrath).

وَمَن يَعْصِي اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا.

“Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a wrong path.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 20 TaaHaa Verse 74.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 29 Al-Ankabut Verse 4.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 33 Al-Ahzab Verse 36.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا يَزِينِي الرَّبَّانِي حِينَ يَئْنِي وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ، وَلَا يَسْرِقُ السَّارِقُ حِينَ يَسْرِقُ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ،  
وَلَا يَشْرِبُ الْحَمْرَ حِينَ يَشْرِبُهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ.

“When a slave of Allah commits illegal sexual intercourse, he is not a believer at the time of committing it; and if the slave steals, he is not a believer at the time of stealing; and if the slave drinks an alcoholic drink when he is not a believer at the time of drinking.”<sup>1</sup>

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِذَا أَذْنَبَ الْعَبْدُ ذَنْبًا كَانَ نُكْتَنَةً سَوْدَاءً فِي قَلْبِهِ، وَإِنْ عَادَ زَادَ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى يَسْوَدَ قَلْبُهُ  
فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: كَلَّا بَلْ رَأَى عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ.

“When the servant commits sins, it becomes a black spot in his heart. And if he should repent, his heart becomes clear again. But if he repeats it, the black spot will enlarge until the [whole] heart turns black.” That is as He, and Exalted is He, says, “By no means! but on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!”<sup>2</sup>

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

قَسْوَةُ الْقَلْبِ مِنْ كَثْرَةِ الدُّنُوبِ.

“Hardness of the heart comes from frequent sins.”

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him also said,

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لِيُخْرِجُ الرِّزْقَ لِذَنْبٍ يُصِيبُهُ.

“Verily, the servant's provision may be withheld because of a sin he committed.”

<sup>1</sup> From Sahih Bukhari and narrated by Ikrina from Ibn 'Abbas. The narration continued with “and he is not a believer when he commits a murder,” ‘Ikrima said: I asked Ibn Abbas, “How is faith taken away from him?” He said, “Like this,” by clasping his hands and then separating them, and added, “But if he repents, faith returns to him like this, by clasping his hands again.”

<sup>2</sup> Surah 83 Al-Mutaffifin Verse 14.

In a Hadith narration, Allah revealed to Moses, upon him be peace, “O Moses! The first of my creation to die was Satan [*Iblis*], may Allah cursed him, for he was the first to disobey Me; and he who disobeys Me, I consider him dead.”

Said ibn al-Musayyib, may Allah’s mercy be upon him, said, “The worshipper honour themselves with nothing [better] than obedience to Allah, nor do they debase themselves with [anything worse than] committing sins and disobedience to Allah. Turning to Allah is sufficient to support the believer when he sees his enemy at ease in disobeying Allah.”

Muhammad ibn Wasi said, “Sins in succession slay the heart.”

One of the virtuous predecessors said, “If you sin and disobey Allah, yet knowing that He sees you, you are scouring Allah’s vision, but if you sin and disobey him, thinking that he does not see you, then you are a disbeliever.”

Wuhaib ibn al-Ward was asked, “Can the servant who disobeys Allah find pleasure in his worship?” He answered, “No! Neither does he who merely intends disobedience.”

The virtuous predecessors used to say, “Sins are the harbinger of disbelief.”

In summary, continually indulging into sinning and disobedience is a sign of having fallen out of the sight disfavour of Allah thus deserving of His displeasure. He who persists in this is detestable to the All-Merciful; he is the Devil’s ally and the believers’ object of disgust. So beware my brother, of exposing yourself to Allah’s displeasure and chastisement by disobeying Him. Should your soul incite you to sin, remind it of Allah’s absolute awareness and the sight of you! Place fear into yourself by recalling Allah’s warnings of the painful torment and terrible punishment that awaits those who disobey Him. Had it been that punishment for committing sins was merely being debarred from reaching the rank of the foremost [*al-sabiqun*] or being deprived of the reward of those most excellent in deeds [*al-muhsinin*], this alone would have sufficient deterrence.

What, then, when indulgence in sin leads to shame, Hellfire, and the wrath of the displeasure of the Compeller, before which the heavens and earth cannot stand?

نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ بِمَنِّهِ.

We ask Allah for safety, by His grace.

## Chapter 6

### Doing Good Deeds and Repenting

#### Quickly Repent If You Sin

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَرِّهُ حَسَنَتُهُ وَسَاءَتُهُ سَيِّئَتُهُ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ.

“Whoever is pleased by his good deeds and displeased by his evil ones is a believer.”

Therefore, O believer, when Allah degree a favour for you to act deeds of obedience to Him, you should express your greatest joy by showing your appreciation to Allah in abundance for honouring you with the divine service to Him and choosing you to attend to Him; and ask Him to accept, by His grace, whatever He has made easy for you in the way of divine worship and virtuous behaviour.

Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “Be more anxious for your works to be accepted than for them to be done, for any accepted deed cannot be considered small.”

After that, always acknowledge your shortcomings in fulfilling your duties to your Lord, even when you are most determined and energetic in obeying Him because His rights upon you are immense. Allah created you from nothing. His favours overflow upon you then treats you with His grace and generosity. By His power and His state,

He causes you to obey Him, and you worship Him by His help and mercy.

Thus is it appropriate for you to soil the robe of your faith and to blacken the countenance of your heart by committing that which your Lord has forbidden you? However, should you fall into sin, even if it is infrequent, hasten to repent, return to obedience, feel remorse, and ask for forgiveness in abundance! Remain fearful and apprehensive, for the believer remains fearful and apprehensive to the extreme even when he is sincere in his obedience and divine service.

You already know how the prophets behaved, even though they were unerring and the saints, also though Allah guards them against committing sins, they were always fearful and wary, though their deeds were excellent and their sins rare or non-existent.

You should be more concerned of this state of fear and anxiety than they because they have a better knowledge of Allah than you, they have a better perception of Allah than you, they are more hopeful of His pardon than you and more ambitious than you for His generosity and grace.

So if you follow in their footsteps and you will be safe and secure. Follow their path, and you will attain to success and many profits.

وَاعْتَصِمْ بِاللّٰهِ.

Seek protection in Allah.

وَمَن يَعْتَصِمْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

For he who seeks protection in Allah will be guided to a straight path.

## Chapter 7

### The Obstacle to Obedience

#### Four Hindrances

Allah created the life of this world such that it is full of trial and tribulations, along with trouble and distress filled with preoccupations and distractions. Thus the situation confronting humankind is such that it diverts one away from acts of obedience to Allah and all around it are abound with attractions away from obedience and incite towards transgression. Even though there are many of these distractions and situation that distracts and turns one away from obedience to Allah, these may be reduced to four categories;

- The first is ignorance,
- The second weakness of faith,
- The third long hopes,
- The fourth eating illicit or dubious food,

Allah willing we shall briefly discuss each of these four categories, to illustrate how blameworthy they indeed are and to show the need for everyone to guard oneself and free oneself from their danger.

وَبِاللّٰهِ التَّوْفِيقُ

We seek the guidance of Allah and from Him is ‘success’.

# Chapter 8

## Ignorance

### Ignorance is the Root of Evil and Harm

As for ignorance, it is the origin of all evil, the root of every harm. Ignorant folk [*jahiliyah*] are included in what the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْدُّنْيَا مَلْعُونَةٌ مَلْعُونُ مَا فِيهَا إِلَّا ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ وَعَالِمٌ وَمُتَعَلِّمٌ.

“The world is accursed, and accursed is what is in it, except the remembrance of Allah [*zikrullah*] and the learned and those seeking for knowledge.”

It is narrated that “after Allah created ignorance He said to it, “Come forward!” but it moved away! Allah said to it, “Go away!” but it came forward! Then Allah commanded, “By My might, I have created nothing in creation more hateful to Me than you, and I shall place you amongst the worst of creation!” ”

Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “There is no enemy worse than ignorance. A man is the enemy of that which he does not know of.”

Thus ignorance is blameworthy according to both textual and rational proof, and its harm is hardly unknown to anyone. An ignorant man succumbs disobedience, to neglecting obligations and committing sins, whether he wishes it or not, because the one who is

ignorant neither knows the responsibilities Allah that has enjoined upon him nor the misdeeds Allah has forbidden.

A person can leave that shadows of ignorance only by the light of knowledge.

By Allah, how excellent are the words of Shaykh Ali ibn Abi Bakr when he said,

الْجَهْلُ نَارٌ لِّدِينِ الْمُرْءَ تَحْرِفُهُ  
وَالْعِلْمُ مَاءٌ لِّتَلْكَ النَّارَ يُطْفِئُهَا

“Ignorance is a fire that burns a man’s religion.

While knowledge is the extinguishing water it that fire.”

And so it is incumbent for you to learn the knowledge of what Allah has made obligatory for you. You are not obliged to acquire extensive knowledge, but you must learn what is essential, that without which your faith remains unsound.

Examples of these are the proper performance of your obligatory rites of worship to Allah and how to avoid what is prohibited, and this is an immediate duty concerning immediate obligations. For those matters that may be deferred<sup>1</sup>, it is a deferred duty.

Malik ibn Dinar, may Allah have mercy on him, used to say, “He who seeks knowledge for himself, a little will suffice him; but he who seeks knowledge for the people<sup>2</sup>, the people’s needs are vast and numerous.

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<sup>1</sup> An example would be the knowledge on how to perform Hajj.

<sup>2</sup> The learned must have a wider range and in depth of knowledge of specific and general, religious and non-religious or worldly knowledge.

# Chapter 9

## The Weakness of Faith [*Iman*]

### An Awful Affliction The Danger of Weakness in Certainty [*Yakin*]

The weakness of faith [*iman*] is an awful affliction from which many blameworthy things arise, like neglecting to act on what one knows, disregarding the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil, harbouring hopes for forgiveness without striving for it, worrying about the provision, fearing people, and other unfortunate character traits. A person's observance of Allah's commands and prohibitions is only proportionate to the strength of his faith. The most obvious proof of a person's weakness in faith is his neglect of injunctions and committing of contraventions.

Every believer should strive to strengthen his faith [*imam*], and there are three ways to do so:

The first is to listen mindfully to the verses of the Quran and the statements of the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, that reveal the promises of Paradise and the threats of hell, the glad tidings of the hereafter, the stories of the earlier prophets, what miracles they were confirmed with, what happened to their opponents, the detachment from the world and the ardent desire for the hereafter which the virtuous predecessors [*salaf as-saleh*] possessed, and such other characteristic and traits that have passed down.

The second is to observe and ponder the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what wondrous signs and beautiful creatures they contain.

The third is to persevere in acts of goodness and to guard oneself against falling into sin and contravention, for faith is both in words and in deeds. It increases with obedience and diminishes with sins.

All the above that we have just mentioned will increase faith and strengthen certitude and certainty.

وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَان

For Allah is the Helper!

# Chapter 10

## Long Term Hopes

### Longing for this World At the Expenses of the Hereafter

Long hopes are incredibly blameworthy. They lead the person to strive and work for the prosperity of this worldly life at the expense of ruining his hereafter. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said:

يَنْجُو أَوْلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بِالرُّهْدِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَقِصْرِ الْأَمْلِ وَيَهْلِكُ آخِرُهَا بِالْحِرْصِ وَطُولِ الْأَمْلِ.

“The first people among this nation will be saved by their detachment from this world and short hopes, while the last among them will perish by greed for this world and long hopes.”

Once, he, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مِنَ الشَّقَاءِ أَرْبَعٌ: جُمُودُ الْعَيْنِ، وَقَسْوَةُ الْقُلْبِ، وَالْحِرْصُ وَطُولُ الْأَمْلِ.

“Four things are of wretchedness: dry eyes<sup>1</sup>, the hardness of the heart, greed, and long hopes.”

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Dry eyes’ – a person who does not regret his misdeeds, as Allah, the Exalted described in Surah 24 at-Taubah Verse 82 “Let them laugh a little: much will they weep: a recompense for the (evil) that they do.”

Once may blessings and peace be upon him invoked,

أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْلَى يُلْهِيَنِي .

“I seek your protection from every hope that may distract me!”

Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “What I fear most for you is what you follow your passions and have long hopes. Following passions repels from the truth, and having long hopes causes you to forget the Hereafter.”

It is a maxim that ‘he whose hopes are long, his works are bad’.

To harbour high hopes is to feel secure that you will remain in this world for a very long time. It shows extreme foolishness and extreme stupidity, for high hopes push away certitude about death and attracts attachment to the illusion of everlasting life. If you say to such a person in the evening, “Are you certain you will live until morning?” or if you say to him in the morning, “Are you certain you will live until evening?” he will say: “No! And yet he still works for this world as if he is never going to die, to the point that if the person is told that he will remain in this world forever, he will be incapable of adding more desire and greed for it.

What can be more foolish than that?

Furthermore, long term hopes are at the root of many evil character traits and acts which hinder obedience to Allah’s commands and invite to sin. Examples of this are avidity, avarice, and the fear of poverty. Among the worst is finding comfort in this world, working to improve one’s lot in it, and striving to amass its debris. The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

بُعْثُتُ لِحَرَابِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ عَمَرَهَا فَلَيُسَرِّ مِنِّي .

“I was sent to destroy the pleasures of this world, so he who advocates it, this is not from me.”

Long term hopes bring about procrastination, which is a most sterile thing, for it never gives birth to anything good. It is said that most of the mournful howling of the people of the fire is due to their

procrastination. The one who procrastinates is ever lazy in obedience, slow in repentance until death overtakes him, then he will say,

فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخْرَنَتِي إِلَى أَجْلٍ فَرِيبٍ فَأَصَدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ.

“Then he should say, “O my Lord! Why did You not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity, and I should have been one of the doers of good.””<sup>1</sup>

But it will be said to him,

وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهَا.

“But to no soul will Allah grant respite when the time appointed for it has come.”<sup>2</sup>

And

أَوْمَّ نُعَمِّرُكُمْ مَا يَتَدَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ فَلُوْقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ.

“Did We not give you long enough life so that he that would receive admonition? Moreover, the warner came to you. So taste you the fruits of your deeds: for the wrong-doers, there is no helper.”<sup>3</sup>

Such a person, the procrastinator, leaves this world with endless sorrow and limitless regret. With that in mind, O my brother shortens your hopes, and let your time of death be before your eyes and your hope behind your back. Seek help in this by always remembering the “defeater of pleasures”<sup>4</sup> and the “disperser of companies”<sup>5</sup>.

Reflect on those who have preceded you, relatives and acquaintances who have passed on. Bring to mind just how near death is, for it is the closest thing lying in wait. Be ready for it; expect its pouncing upon you any time.

Once the Messenger of Allah may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family, said,

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 63 Al-Munafiqun Verse 10.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 63 Al-Munafiqun Verse 11.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 35 Fatir Verse 37.

<sup>4</sup> That is death that separates man from his love ones!

<sup>5</sup> That is separate us from our companions and relatives!

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا رَفَعْتُ طَرَفِي وَظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي أَحْفَضُهُ حَتَّى أَقْبَضَ وَلَا أَكُلُّ لُفْمَةً  
فَظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي أُسْعِنُهَا حَتَّى أُغْصَّ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَوْتِ.

“By He in whose hand is my soul, I never raised my eyes thinking I would lower them before my soul is taken, nor have I ever eaten a morsel thinking that I would swallow it without choking on it because of death.”

Sometimes he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, rubbed the wall for the substitute dry ablution [*tayammum*], and, when it was said to him, “Water is near,” he replied, “How do I know that I will ever reach it?”

The Rightly-Guided Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq may Allah be pleased with him, used to recite,

كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مُصَبِّحٌ فِي أَهْلِهِ \* وَالْمَوْتُ أَدْنَى مِنْ شِرَارِكَ تَعْلِيهِ

“Every man wakes up at home with his family,

While death is nearer to him than the laces of his sandals.”

The Proof of Islam, Imam Ghazzali, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “You should know that death does not pounce at a specific time, situation, or age, but it is certain to pounce. Therefore, preparing for it has priority over preparing for this world.”

## Chapter 11

### The Ill-Gotten and Doubtful

#### **Do not take it whether Food or Provision**

Consuming ill-gotten and doubtful food inevitably hinders obedience and invites to transgression. It was narrated that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace and be upon said,

مَنْ أَكَلَ الْحَلَالَ أَطَاعَتْ جَوَارِحُهُ شَاءَ أَمْ أَبَى، وَمَنْ أَكَلَ الْحَرَامَ عَصَتْ جَوَارِحُهُ شَاءَ أَمْ أَبَى.

“He who eats food earned lawfully [*halal*], his body parts obey whether he wishes or not; but those who eat food earned unlawful or prohibited [*haram*], his body parts sin, whether he wishes it or not.”

It was also reported, or a historical record of the pious predecessors [*salaf salleh*] that mentioned, “Eat what you wish, for that is how you will act”.

A certain gnostic once said, “People are severed from the truth and excluded from the circle of sainthood only because they do no scrutinise what they eat.”

Because he whose food is ill-gotten or unlawful and doubtful, even if he acts in obedience, his acts are unacceptable to Allah, for Allah, the Exalted says,

إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Allah do accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous.”<sup>1</sup>

وَاللَّهُ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَعْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا.

Allah is all-good and only accepts what is good.<sup>2</sup>

O my brother, refrain from eating the ill-gotten for this is obligatory, and similarly the doubtful, for restraining oneself from the questionable is scrupulousness. And seek only the lawful [halal], for this is an obligation, among other obligations. When you obtain lawful [halal] food and clothes, eat and dress with moderation. Do not be excessive, for the lawful [halal] does not bear excessiveness. Beware of eating to satiety, if eating lawful [halal] to satiety is the beginning of evil, then what about ill-gotten food?

Then, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَا مَلَأَ ابْنَ آدَمَ وَعَاءً شَرَّاً مِنْ بَطْنِهِ، حَسِبَ ابْنَ آدَمَ لُقِيمَاتُ يُقْيِنُ صُلْبَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا  
مَحَالَةً: فَثُلُثٌ لِطَعَامِهِ وَثُلُثٌ لِشَرَابِهِ وَثُلُثٌ لِنَفْسِهِ.

“The son of Adam never fills a container worse than his stomach. It should suffice the son of Adam a few morsels of food to keep his back straight. If it is necessary, then a third of the stomach for food, a third for his beverage and a third for his breath.”<sup>3</sup>

وَالسَّلَامُ.

Peace and Safe.

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 5 Al-Maida Verse 27.

<sup>2</sup> Recorded in Sahih Muslim that Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "O people, Allah is Good and He, therefore, accepts only that which is good. And Allah commanded the believers as He commanded the Messengers by saying, "O Messengers, eat of the good things, and do good deeds; verily I am aware of what you do," (Surah 23 al Mukminin Verse 51) and "O you who believe, eat of the good things that We gave you'." (Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 172)

<sup>3</sup> This hadith was reported by an-Nasaa'ee and at-Tirmidhi, who said, "Hasan Sahih" Imam ad-Dhahabi quoted in his book "at-Tibb an-Nabawi" (p. 34-35)

# Chapter 12

## Sincerity

### The Essence in Divine Worship

Allah, the Exalted say,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ.

“I have only created jinns and men, that they may serve Me.”<sup>1</sup>

The Exalted say,

يَعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِلَيَّ يَفْاعِلُونَ.

“O My servants who believe! Truly, spacious is My earth: therefore you should serve Me and Me alone.”<sup>2</sup>

Hence it is incumbent upon you, O believer, may Allah grant you success, to make yourself free for the divine worship of your Lord by removing all hindrances and avoiding all diversions and obstacles.

Then you should know that worship cannot be sound without knowledge, and knowledge and divine deeds cannot be of benefit without sincerity. Thus it is incumbent upon you to note that sincerity is the axis around which everything revolves, the foundation upon which everything stands.

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 51 ad-Dhaariyat Verse 56.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 29 Al-Ankabut Verse 56.

As Abul Qasim al Qushayri, may Allah's mercy be upon him said, "Sincerity in divine worship is to have no other intention than to demonstrate your acts of obedience to Allah, the Real, which means that you should intend with your acts of obedience to draw nearer to Allah, nothing else! Not for showing off or ostentation for other created being to see, or wishing and hoping to be praised among people, or hoping to attract people attention to your action or any other intentions than drawing nearer to Allah."

He continued his counsel, "It would be true to say that sincerity is to free the act of divine worship from been watch by other creations."

Sincerity is the essence of this chapter.

# Chapter 13

## Ostentation [*Riya*']

### Beware of Showing Off

Beware of ostentation [*Riya*] or showing off because it invalidates your acts of divine worship, leads to the loss of reward for your deeds, and brings on detestation and punishment from Allah, the All-Mighty. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him called it “the lesser idolatry” [*shirk*].

Then in an authentic tradition, he may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

أَوْلُ حَلْقِ اللَّهِ تَصْلَى بِهِمِ النَّارُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: رَجُلٌ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ لِيُقَالَ إِنَّهُ قَارِئٌ، وَرَجُلٌ أَسْتُشْهِدَ وَمَا قَاتَلَ إِلَّا لِيُقَالَ إِنَّهُ جَرِيءٌ، وَرَجُلٌ لَهُ مَالٌ تَصَدَّقَ مِنْهُ صَدَقَةً لِيُقَالَ إِنَّهُ جَوَادٌ.

“The first of Allah’s creation to fuel the fire of hell will be three: The man who recites the Quran so that it may be said that ‘He is a reciter’; a man who is killed, having fought only so it may be noted that ‘He is courageous’; and a wealthy man who gives charity only so openly that it may be said that ‘He is generous.’”<sup>1</sup>

Ostentation [*riya*] or showing off is to seek praise or importance in people’s eyes in the first instances with acts that were intended to draw nearer to Allah, such as ritual prayers and fast.

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<sup>1</sup> From a very long hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim.

Should you perceive ostentation in yourself, do not try to rid yourself of it by abandoning works [*amal*] that is, the divine deeds, thus pleasing the devil. Divine Deeds that can only be done in public, such as going on pilgrimage, fighting in the cause of Allah [*Jihad*], acquiring knowledge, congregational prayers, and similar deeds, you should perform publicly as Allah recommended you.

Strive against your ego and seek Allah's help! As for other kinds of divine deeds, like fasting, nightly vigils, charity, and Quran recitation, these you should go to extremes to conceal, for performing them in secret is unreservedly preferable, except for those who are safe from ostentation, who hope to be emulated by others, and who are well qualified for this.

# Chapter 14

## Beware of Vanity

### An Inflated Conception of Self Worth

Beware of Vanity for it invalidates your deeds.

The Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْعَجْبُ يَا أَكْلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارَ الْحَطَبَ.

“Vanity consumes good deeds just as fire consumes firewood.”<sup>1</sup>

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ثَلَاثُ مُهْلِكَاتٍ: شُحُّ مُطَاعَ, وَهُوَى مُتَّبِعٌ, وَإِعْجَابُ الْمَرءِ بِنَفْسِهِ.

“Three characteristic are ruinous: avarice<sup>2</sup> that one obeys, passion [nafsu] or desire that one follows, and admirations that one has for himself.”<sup>3</sup>

Vanity is for someone to see himself as important, his action as correct and behavior as excellent. From this arises showing off

<sup>1</sup> From Sunan Abu Dawud and also Bayhaki and narrated from Abu Hurairah, may Allah be please with him.

<sup>2</sup> ‘varice’ or greed is an extremely strong desire to obtain or keep wealth, money or possessions.

<sup>3</sup> At-Tabarani recorded in his *Akbar* and narrated by Abu Hurairah, may Allah be please with him.

one's works, feeling superior and better than other people, and being self-satisfied.

Just as Ibn Ata'illah may Allah have mercy upon him said, "The root of every sin, distraction, or love for the lower desires [syahwat] is self-satisfaction or approval."

He who is satisfied with himself does not see his shortcomings. And he who is unaware of all of his flaws how he can succeed?

وَعَيْنُ الرِّضَا عَنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ كَلِيلَةٌ      وَكِنْ عَيْنُ السُّخْطِ تُبَدِّي الْمُسَاوِيَا

When the eyes are pleased, every shortcoming are minor

Just like,

When the eyes are displeased, all wrongdoings are apparent.

## Chapter 15

### Love of this World

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا رَأْسُ كُلِّ حَطَبَيْةٍ.

“The love of this world is the head of every sin.”<sup>1</sup>

Hence, it is the root of every wrongdoing, the origin of every calamity, the essence of every seduction and temptation [*fitnah*] and the source of every hardship. Its evil has spread in these times and has become a grave danger involving everyone. The people exhibited it shamelessly as if it is nothing disgraceful and reprehensible.

The love of this world has taken over the hearts of people such that it resulted in excessive eagerness to strive for the world and accumulates its debris of wealth and pleasure. Day and night with all their effort, they roam about hunting and seeking whatever provisions they can get from this world regardless of whether it is doubtful or unlawful. As if Allah had made affluence in this world an obligation upon them, just like prayers and fasting.

For this reason, religion is losing its landmarks: the lights of certitude are being extinguished, the tongues of the reminders are

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<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Baihaki who rated it as coming from a good [*hasan*] chain and narrated by Hasan AlBasri may Allah's mercy be upon him.

silent, the paths of guidance have disappeared, and thus increasingly many people tread the paths of ruin.

By Allah! So this is what is called by the blind and deaf temptation, dark and pitch-black; whereby no prayer is answered, and no call heard.

Rightly so as spoken by the Master of All Prophets, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon, when he said,

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فِتْنَةٌ وَفِتْنَةٌ أُمَّتِي الْمَالُ، وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عِجْلٌ وَعِجْلٌ أُمَّتِي الدِّينَارُ وَالدِّرْهَمُ .

“Each nation has its temptation [fitnah], and the temptation of my nation is money. Each nation has its calf, the calf of my nation is the dinar and the dirham.”<sup>1</sup>

For its meaning, only Allah knows best! In order words, each nation is tested in a particular manner and gives excessive attention to it thus neglecting the worship of Allah, just as the Children of Israel attended to the worship of the golden calf that was created by Samiri, thus abandoning the worship of Allah, the Exalted.

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<sup>1</sup> At-Termidhi recorded this hadith in his collection and classified it as sahih.

# Categories of Lives and Vanities of this World

It is best to conclude this brief exposition with a few quotations reflecting on the fault of the inordinate love of this world and of the person who makes it his priority. But we must proceed with a rule that can be acted upon and referred back to as guidelines. With that in mind, we say that success is from Allah.

This world is of three kinds: one leading to rewards, another leading to accountability and a third leading to torment.

As for the life that leads to rewards, it is one in which you work for and attain good and also escape evil. The world is the riding mount of the believer and the harvesting ground of the Hereafter, and this consists of the necessities of life that are lawfully acquired.

As for the life that leads one to accountability, it is that life which neither prevents you from an obligation nor induces you to indulge in transgression, and this is the kind of worldly situation which leads to protracted reckoning in the Hereafter. It is that of the rich whom the poor will precede into the Garden by half a day in the Hereafter, which is equivalent to five hundred years of current time.

As for the life that leads to torment, it is one living a life that prevents you from your obligations or lures you into transgression. For its owner, this life is provision for the Fire and his path to the abode of ruin.

The above is what is meant by the following narrated statement, “Allah orders the world to be cast into the Fire. It cries, “O Lord! My supporters, my followers!” Then He, the Glorious says, “Let its supporters and followers join it!” Then they are indeed made to join it.”<sup>1</sup>

You should know that the pursuers of this world are of three kinds.

Some pursue it for the worldly wealth with the intention of giving to relatives and comforting the poor. Such people are considered to be generous, and they will be rewarded if their acts match their intentions. However, they lack wisdom, for the wise do not seek that whose consequences they do not know. Let them heed the lesson in the story of Tha'laba, to whom Allah, the Exalted alludes in the Quranic verse,

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهَ لَغْيَنْ آتَنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَدَّقُنَّ.

“Amongst them are men who made a covenant with Allah, that if He bestowed on them of His bounty, they would give largely in charity.”<sup>2</sup>

There are yet others who have nothing but their appetites and pleasure in mind. They are likened to cattle, as Allah the Exalted says, أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ، إِنْ هُنْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُنْ أَصْنَافٌ سَيِّلًا. “Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle; nay, they are worse astray in Path.”<sup>3</sup>

Then others frequently pursue worldly things to boast, bragging and rivalry. These folks are considered illusion fools or, worse still, the ruined losers.

قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنْاسٍ مَّشْرِئَهُمْ.

“Each group knew its place for water.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From Baihaki and narrated by Baraa bin Azib.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 75.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 25 al-Furqan Verse 44.

<sup>4</sup> Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 60 and the verse continued “So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do no evil nor mischief on the face of the earth.

وَرِبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِمُونَ.

“And thy Lord knows all that their hearts conceal and all that they reveal.”<sup>1</sup>

O my brother, counsel yourself honestly and do not betray yourself by feigning something you do not intend, for you will have combined bankruptcy with false pretence and will lose both this world and the next.

أَلَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ.

“Ah! That is indeed the (real and) evident Loss!”<sup>2</sup>

Now that the preceding discussion on this world is complete, let us now move on to the conclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 28 As Qasas Verse 69.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 39 az-Zumar Verse 15.

## Conclusion on this Worldly Lives

Below, we conclude the discussion about this worldly lives with verses of the Book of Allah, traditions from the practices [*sunna*] of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and the sayings of the sages among men of Allah. They concern the insignificance of this world, the speed with which it perishes, and the foolishness of those who are deceived by it and trust in it. These passages encourage those who read them and who possess heart or listen with attentiveness to detach them from desiring this world.

Indeed Allah's utterances is real and His words are the Truth, He, the Exalted says,

إِنَّمَا مِثْلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاحْتَلَطَ بِهِ بَنَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ  
النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخْدَتِ الْأَرْضُ رُحْرُقَهَا وَازْيَّنَتْ وَظَانَ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ  
عَلَيْهَا أَتَهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَنْ لَمْ تَعْنِ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذِيلَكَ نُفَصِّلُ  
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَنْفَكِّرُونَ.

“The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain which We send down from the skies: by its mingling arises the produce of the earth, which provides food for men and animals: It grows till the earth is clad with its golden ornaments and is cover in its beauty: the people to whom it belongs, they think they have all powers of disposal over it: There reaches it Our command by night or by day, and We make it like a harvest clean-mown as if it had not flourished only the day before! Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who reflect.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 10 Yunus Verse 24.

And He, the Exalted says,

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوْهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَالًا. وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرْزاً.

“Indeed we have made what's on earth nothing more than a glittering show for the earth, so that We may test them - as to which of them are best in conduct. Verily what is on earth we shall make but as dust and dry soil without growth or herbage.”<sup>1</sup>

And He, the Exalted says,

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ رَهْرَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ حَيْثُ وَأَبْقَى.

“Nor strain your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendour of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of thy Lord is better and more enduring.”<sup>2</sup>

And He, the Exalted says,

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ.

“To any that desires the tilth of the Hereafter, We give increase in his tilth, and to any that desires the tilth of this world, We grant somewhat thereof, but he has no share or lot in the Hereafter.”<sup>3</sup>

And He, the Exalted says,

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاهُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأُولَادِ كَمَثَلِ عَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ بَنَاهُ ثُمَّ يَهْبِطُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًا، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَّامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَّعُ الْعُرُورِ.

<sup>1</sup> Surah 18 Al- Kahf Verse 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 20 TaaHaa Verse 131.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 42 Ash-Shura Verse 20.

“You should know that the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, in rivalry among yourselves, accumulating riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight the hearts of the tillers; soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe for the devotees of wrong and forgiveness from Allah and His Good Pleasure for the devotees of Allah. The life of this world is nothing but goods and chattels of deception?”<sup>1</sup>

And He the Exalted says,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ . وَإِثْرَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا . فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ .

“Then, for such as had transgressed all bounds, and had preferred the life of this world, for indeed, their Abode will be Hell-Fire.”<sup>2</sup>

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

الدُّنْيَا مَلْعُونَةٌ مَلْعُونُونَ مَا فِيهَا ، إِلَّا ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ وَعَالَمٌ وَمُتَعَلِّمٌ .

“The world is accursed, and accursed is what is in it, except the remembrance of Allah, the learned and those engaged learning.”<sup>3</sup>

فَلَوْ كَانَتِ الدُّنْيَا تَرْبُّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعْوضَةٍ ، مَا سَقَىٰ كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةً مَاءً .

“Had this world mattered to Allah the weight of a fly's wing, He would not have granted any disbeliever a sip of water.”<sup>4</sup>

“This world is a dirty foul carcass. الدُّنْيَا حِينَةٌ قَذِيرَةٌ .”<sup>5</sup>

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَىٰ جَعَلَ مَا يَخْرُجُ مِنِ ابْنِ آدَمَ مَثَلًا لِلدُّنْيَا .

“Verily, Allah the Exalted has made what comes out of the son of Adam the example of this world.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Surah 57 Al- Hadid Verse 20.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 79 an-Naaziat Verses 37-39.

<sup>3</sup> Recorded by atTabarani and Abi Darda, may Allah be please with him, narrated.

<sup>4</sup> A hadith recorded by at-Termidhi and narrated by abdulhamid bin Sulaiman, emphasizing that the worthlessness of this world.

<sup>5</sup> Recorded in Al-Muwatta Imam Malik and narrated by Anas ibn Malik.

<sup>6</sup> Recorded in Musnad of Imam Ahmad.

مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ: إِلَّا مِثْلٌ مَا يَضْعُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعُهُ فِي الْيَمِّ فَيَنْظُرُ بِمَا دَأَ يَرْجِعُ.

“This world compared to the Hereafter is just like one of you dipping his finger in the ocean, then he looks at what it brings back.”<sup>1</sup>

لَيَوْدَنَ كُلُّ أَحَدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَنَّهُ مَا أُعْطَى مِنَ الدُّنْيَا كَانَ قَوْتًا.

“On the day of Arising, everyone will wish that he had been given nothing of this world except the bare necessities.”

إِنَّ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِكُمْ عَقَبَةً كَهُودًا لَا يَجْوِزُهَا: إِلَّا الْمُخْفُونَ.

“A difficult obstacle stands before you, and only those who are lightly laden will cross it.”

وَقَالَ: رَجُلٌ، هَلْ أَنَا مِنَ الْمُخْفَيْنَ، يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ: هَلْ عِنْدَكَ قُوَّتُ يَوْمِكَ؟

قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: هَلْ عِنْدَكَ قُوَّتُ غَدِيرِ؟ قَالَ: لَا. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

لَوْ كَانَ عِنْدَكَ قُوَّتُ غَدِيرٍ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُخْفَيْنَ.

Then a man asked, “Am I one of the lightly laden, O Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “Are you in possession of your day’s provision?” He replied, “Yes!” He asked, “Are you in possession of tomorrow’s provision?” He replied, “No!” The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said, “Had you been in possession of tomorrow’s provision, you would not have been one of the lightly laden.”

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,  
الْدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ حَضِيرَةٌ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَحْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَنَاظِرٌ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ فَاقْتَلُوا الدُّنْيَا، وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ. فَوَاللَّهِ مَا الْفَقْرَ أَحْشَى عَلَيْكُمْ. إِنَّمَا أَحْشَى أَنْ تُبْسِطَ عَلَيْكُمُ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا بُسِطَتْ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ فَتَنَافَسُوهَا كَمَا تَنَافَسُوهَا، فَتُؤْلِكُمْ كَمَا أَهْلَكْتُكُمْ.

“This world is fair and green, and indeed, Allah has given you mastery over it to see what you will do. So you should beware of this world and beware of women, for by Allah, it is poverty that I fear for you, however, I fear that this world will be given to you freely as it was

<sup>1</sup> Recorded in Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.

freely given to those before you, that you shall compete for it as those before you did. And that it shall destroy you as it destroys them.”

إِنَّ مِمَّا أَحَادُفُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِعْدِي مَا يُفْتَحُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ زِينَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزَهْرَتِهَا إِحْدَرُوهَا. فَإِنَّهَا أَسْخَرٌ مِنْ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ.

“Among the things I fear for you after me is that which will be (openly) presented to you from among the attractions of this world, its beauties ornaments and embellishment, beware of these because it is more enchanting than Harut and Marut.”<sup>1</sup>

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ.

“This world is the prison of the believer and the garden of the disbeliever.”

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَدْوِدُ الدُّنْيَا عَنْ عَبْدِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَمَا يَذْوِدُ الرَّاعِي الشَّقِيقُ غَنَمَهُ عَنْ مَرَاطِعِ الْهَلْكَةِ.

“Indeed, Allah keeps the world away from His believing servants, just as a careful shepherd keeps his flock away from dangerous pastures.”

ذَنْبٌ لَا يُغْفَرُ، حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا.

“A sin that cannot be forgiven is the love of this world!”

مَنْ أَحَبَّ آخِرَتَهُ أَضَرَّ بِدُنْيَاهُ وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ دُنْيَاهُ أَضَرَّ بِآخِرَتِهِ فَأَتْرُوا مَا يَبْقَى عَلَى مَا يَفْنِي.

“He who loves his afterlife disregards his world, and he who loves his world disregards his afterlife. So choose that which is permanent over that which is ephemeral!”

مُرَّةُ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةُ الْآخِرَةِ، حُلْوَةُ الدُّنْيَا مُرَّةُ الْآخِرَةِ.

“When the world is bitter, the Hereafter will be sweet; but when the world is sweet, the Hereafter will be bitter.”<sup>2</sup>

الْأَكْثَرُونَ هُمُ الْأَقْلُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا مَنْ قَالَ هَكَذَا وَ هَكَذَا.

<sup>1</sup> These two angels are described in Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 102. They teach men Magic, and such things like the means to sow discord between man and wife, and actions that only harmed you, not what profits even though all these could not harm anyone except by Allah's permission, those who practice these would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Recorded in Al-Mustadrak alaa al-Sahihain (A five volume hadith collection) by Hakim al-Nishaburi.

“Those who possess plenty will be those who possess little on the Day of Arising, except for those who do this and this.” (The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, gestured with his hands as one giving away possessions).<sup>1</sup>

لِئِجَاهِنَّ بِأَقْوَامٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، هُمْ أَعْمَالٌ كَجِبَالٍ تِحَاماً، فَتُجْعَلُ هَبَاءً مُنْثُرًا، وَيُؤْمَرُ بِهِمْ إِلَى النَّارِ، كَانُوا يُصَلُّونَ وَيُصُومُونَ وَيَأْكُزُونَ هِينَةً مِنَ الْيَلِ، فَإِذَا لَاحَ لَهُمْ شَيْءٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَتَبَوَّا عَلَيْهِ.

“Some people will be brought on the Day of Arising who have deeds like the mountains of Tihama, but these will be turned into scattered dust, and they will be ordered into the Fire. They used to pray and fast and keep vigil part of the night, but when something of this world caught their attention, the pounced on it.”

مَا لِي وَلِلْدُنْيَا؟ مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا كَرَابٍ سَارَ فِي يَوْمٍ صَافِ فَقَالَ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ رَاحَ.

“What have I to do with this world? But the likeness of myself and the world is that of a rider riding on a hot day; he rested and took shade under a tree for a while, then departed.”

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ آمِنًا فِي سِرْبِيهِ، مُعَافَٰ فِي جَسَدِهِ، عِنْدَهُ قُوتُ يَوْمِهِ، فَكَانَمَا حِيْرَتْ إِلَيْهِ الدُّنْيَا بِحَدَّ افِيرِهَا.

“He who wakes up in the morning, secure in his home, healthy in his body, possessing his day’s provision, he is as if the whole world has been given to him.”

بِعِشْتُ لِحَرَابِ الدُّنْيَا، فَمَنْ عَمَرَهَا فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي

“I was raised to be a prophet to defeat this world; thus, whosoever works to achieve its prosperity is not of me.”

<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Ibn Majah and narrated by Abi Dhar.

مَنْ كَانَتْ نِيَّتُهُ الْآخِرَةَ، جَعَلَ اللَّهُ غِنَاهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ، وَجَمَعَ لَهُ شَمَلَهُ، وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ. وَمَنْ كَانَتْ نِيَّتُهُ الدُّنْيَا: جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْفُقْرَ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ وَشَتَّتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُهُ وَلَمْ يَأْتِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ.

“He whose intention is the Hereafter, Allah makes him rich in his heart, and gather his affair for him, and the world comes to him subdued. But he whose intention is this world, Allah places poverty between his eyes, disperses his affair, and still, nothing of this world will come to him save that which was written for him.”

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَائِنًا غَرِيبًا، أَوْ عَابِرًا سَيِّلًا وَعُدُّ نَعْسَلَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ.

“Be in this world as a stranger or a passerby, and count yourself among the people of the graves.”

إِزْهَدْ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُحِبِّكَ اللَّهُ، وَإِزْهَدْ فِيمَا فِي أَيْدِي النَّاسِ يُحِبِّكَ النَّاسُ.

Renounce this world and Allah will love you. Renounce what is in people's hand and people will love you.”

الْدُّنْيَا دَارُ مَنْ لَا دَارَ لَهُ، وَمَالُ مَنْ لَا مَالَ لَهُ، وَلَهَا يَجْمَعُ مَنْ لَا عَقْلَ، لَهُ وَعَلَيْهَا يَحْرُثُ مَنْ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ، وَعَلَيْهَا يَخْسُدُ مَنْ لَا فِتْهَةَ لَهُ، وَبِهَا يَفْرَحُ مَنْ لَا يَقِينَ لَهُ.

“This world is the abode of those who have no abode in the hereafter; And the wealth of those who have no wealth in the hereafter; And whoever amasses this world is mindless; whoever grieves over it does not have knowledge; he who has no understanding envies other for it, and he who has no certainty rejoices in it.”

مَا يَسْكُنُ حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا قَلْبَ عَبْدٍ إِلَّا اتَّاطَ مِنْهَا بِشَلَاثٍ: شُغْلٌ لَا يَنْفَكُ عَنَاهُ. وَفَقْرٌ لَا يُدْرِكُ غِنَاهُ. وَأَمْلٌ لَا يُنَالُ مُنْتَهَاهُ.

“The love of this world never settles in the heart of a servant without him been afflicted with three things: the pressure of work that never finishes; poverty that never reaches sufficiency and hope (or ambition) whose limit is never reached.”

إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةَ طَالِبَتَانِ وَمَطْلُوبَتَانِ، فَطَالِبُ الْآخِرَةِ: تَطْلُبُهُ الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى يَسْتَوْفِي رِزْقُهُ.  
وَطَالِبُ الدُّنْيَا تَطْلُبُهُ الْآخِرَةُ: حَتَّى يَأْخُذُ الْمَوْتُ بِعُقْدِهِ.

“This world and the Hereafter are both seekers and sought. He who seeks the Hereafter, the world seeks him until he receives all his provisions, but he who seeks this world, the Hereafter seeks him until death grasps him by the throat.”

أَلَا وَإِنَّ السَّعِيدَ مَنْ آثَرَ باقِيَةً يَدُومُ نَعِيمُهَا عَلَى فَانِيَةٍ لَا يَنْفَدُ عَذَابُهَا، وَقَدْ لَمَّا  
يَقْدُمُ عَلَيْهِ مِمَّا هُوَ الآنِ فِي يَدِيهِ، قَبْلَ أَنْ يُخَلِّفَهُ لِمَنْ يَسْعَدُ بِإِنْفَاقِهِ وَقَدْ شَقِّيَ هُوَ  
بِجَمِيعِهِ وَاحْتِكَارِهِ.

“Indeed, the fortunate person is he who chooses permanent and lasting pleasures over that which is temporary and of endless torment. He is the one who gives what is in his hand for the sake of where he is going, before leaving it (the worldly wealth) to those who will happily spend it after he has toiled to accumulate and monopolise it.”

تَعْسَ عَبْدُ الدُّنْيَا وَانْتَكَسَ، فَإِذَا شِئْكَ فَلَا انتَفَشَ.

“May the servant of his world be wretched and abased! And if he is pricked may he not be treated!”

الرَّهَادَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا: ثُرِيَّعُ الْقَلْبَ وَالْبَدَنَ. وَالرَّعْبَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا: تُكْثِرُ الْهَمَّ وَالْحَزْنَ.  
وَالْبَطَالَةُ تُقْسِي الْقَلْبَ.

“Renouncing this world relieves the heart and the body, whereas the desire for this world increases anxiety and sorrow and while idleness will harden the heart.”

إِنَّ النُّورَ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْقَلْبَ اِنْسَرَحَ لَهُ وَانْفَسَحَ، قِيلَ: فَهَلْ لِذَلِكَ مِنْ عَلَامَةٍ؟  
قَالَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ: الْتَّجَافِ عَنْ دَارِ الْغُرُورِ وَالْإِنَابَةُ إِلَى دَارِ الْخُلُودِ وَالإِسْتِعْدَادُ  
لِلْمَوْتِ قَبْلَ نُرُولِهِ.

“Indeed, light when it penetrates the heart, the latter enlarges for it and expands. The companions asked, “Is there a sign for this?” The Prophet may be blessings and peace upon him, replied, “Shunning the

abode of illusion, attending to the abode of immortality, and preparing for death before its occurrence.”

Allah, revealed to Moses, peace be upon him, “O Moses! When I love My servant, I hide the world from him, thus do I treat those I love. O Moses! When you see wealth coming, say, ‘It is a sin! The punishment of which has been hastened!’ But when you see poverty coming to you say, ‘Welcome to the inner garment of the virtuous!’”

And Allah revealed to David, peace be upon him, “O David! Who prefers the desires of this world over the pleasures of the Hereafter, he has grasped the loose handhold. But he who prefers the desire for the Hereafter over the pleasures of this world, he has grasped the firm handhold that never breaks.”<sup>1</sup>

And Allah revealed to Jesus, peace be upon him, “O Jesus! Tell the Children of Israel to remember two things from Me: Tell them to be content with little of their world for the safety of their religion, just as the people of this world are content with little religion for the sake of their world,”

In one of the revealed scripture, whereby Allah says, “The least I do to a scholar who finds comfort in this world is to remove the sweetness of communing with Me from his hearts.”

A statement recorded that Allah, the Exalted said to the world, “O world! Be bitter for my protégés, be not sweet for them so as not to tempt them.”

Then Ali ibn Abi Talib may Allah honour his countenance said, “The likeness of this world and the Hereafter is that of the east and the west; the nearer you draw to one, the farther you move from the other. They are like the two wives when you satisfy one; you anger the other. They like two vessels, one empty and the other full when you pour into the empty one; the other diminishes accordingly.”

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 2 Al-Baqara Verse 256. “Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. Allah hears and knows all things.

He, may Allah be pleased with him also said, “I found this world to be six matters: That which is to ‘eat’, the best tasting is honey, which is the secretion of an insect. That which is to ‘drink’, the best is water, which is shared equally amongst the righteous and the depraved. That which is to ‘smell’, the most fragrant is musk, which is from the blood of an animal. That which is to ‘worn’, the softest is silk, which is the weaving of a worm. That which is to ‘ride’, the worthiest is the horse, on whose back men are slain. That which one ‘marry’, that results in coital, the meeting of the base fluid of male to the base fluid of female. It is sufficient for you to know that although the woman adorns herself with the best she has, your desire for her is for the basest she has!”

He, may Allah be pleased with him also said, “Happy are those who renounce the world and desire the Hereafter. They are people who take the ground for a carpet, its dust for a bed, its water for perfume, and make supplication and the Quran their inner and outer garments. They reject the world according to the pattern of Isa [Jesus], peace be upon him.”

In this vein, the poet recited,

طَلَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا وَخَافُوا الْفَتَنَا \* إِنَّ اللَّهَ رِحَالًا فُطَنَا

Indeed Allah has astute men,  
who divorce the world and fear temptation.

أَنَّهَا لَيْسَتْ لِحَيْثِي وَطَنَا \* نَظَرُوا فِيهَا فَلَمَّا عَلِمُوا

They look at it and then realised,  
that it is not a place for living.

جَعَلُوهَا لُجَّةً وَاتَّخَذُوا \* صَالِحُ الْأَعْمَالِ فِيهَا سُفْنَا

They treat it like the sea, sailing  
through in ships doing their good deeds.

Said bin al-Musaiyib, may Allah be pleased with him said, “This world is vile, and it resembles vile people. The vilest is he who acquires it in a manner he should not have.” That is, illicitly.

In the same meaning, al-Mutanabbi recited an ode' [qasidah],

وَشِبْهُ الشَّيْءِ مُنْجَذِبٌ إِلَيْهِ \* وَأَشْبَهُنَا بِدُنْيَا الطَّعَامُ

Every race is attracted to itself those of us who are  
comfortable in our world are only dumb

وَلَوْ لَمْ يَعْلُمْ إِلَّا ذُو مَحْلٍ \* تَعَالَى الْجَيْشُ وَانْحَطَ الْقَتَامُ

If one sits in high status without having to work for it,  
inevitably when the army above descends, there will be  
nothing but dust and sand below.

Al Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy upon him, said,  
“Death has exposed this world and left no joy in it for anyone who  
understands. May Allah have mercy on a man who wears worn-out  
clothes, eats a crust of bread, keeps low to the ground, weeps for his  
sins and perseveres in worship.”

“When the love of this world enters the heart, fear of the  
Hereafter exits from it. Beware of the worldly distractions, for no  
servant opens a door of this world without several doors of good deeds  
for the Hereafter close before him.”

“Wretched is the son of Adam; he thinks his money too little  
but never his works. He rejoices when afflicted in his religion but  
grieves when afflicted in his worldly things. This world was founded  
on afflictions and diseases. Suppose you are free of all afflictions and  
cure of all diseases, can you escape death?”

Just as the poet hit the right point when he recited,

أَيْسَ الْمَوْتَ يَأْتِيكَ \* هِبِ الدُّنْيَا ثُوايْبِكَا

Do you think that after the world was presented  
to you, death will not drop by

دَعِ الدُّنْيَا لِشَائِيكَا \* أَلَا يَا طَالِبَ الدُّنْيَا

O the seeker of the world! Leave this worldly life for your enemy!

وَظِلُّ الْمَيْلِ يَكْفِيْكَا \* فَمَا تَصْنَعُ بِدِي الدُّنْيَا

What do you want to do with this world,  
is not a little of it enough for you!

Muhammad al-Baqir, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “What is this world? What can it ever be? Is it anything but a ‘mount’ you ride, a robe you wear, or a woman you marry?”

Wahid bin Munabbah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The Garden has eight gates. When people reach them, the guardians will say, “By our Lord’s might! None shall enter it before those who renounced the world and those who passionately love the Garden!”

Muhammad bin Sirin, said, “Two men quarrelled about a piece of land. Allah said to it, “Speak to them!” The ground then said, “O wretched ones! A thousand partial blind men-owned me before you, let alone those with good vision and healthy!”<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hazim al-Madani, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “There is nothing in this world that will delight you without having something accompanying it that will distress you. This world is a place of tortuosity, not of straightness, of soil, not of joy, of affliction, not of affluence.”

His wife once told him, “Winter is coming; we must have food, clothes and firewood.” He answered, “All these are not inescapable necessities, what is inescapable is that we shall die, then be resurrected, then stand before Allah, then it will be either the Garden or the Fire.”

Al-Madani, may Allah have mercy on him, also said, “There is not one thing of this world at which point you place your hand just to find that a sinful man has done so before you.”

“The favour of this world which Allah withholds from me is greater than His favour in granting me some of it.”

“What has elapsed of the world is like a dream, and what remains of it is nothing but hopes.”

Al-Madani then recited the following poem,

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<sup>1</sup> It means that all the previous owners eventual die!

كَعُبُورٌ طَيْفٌ أَوْ كَظِلٌ زَائِلٌ \* إِنَّ الْلَّيْبَ بِمِثْلِهَا لَا يُحْدَعُ

Like a spectrum of dreams or like a disappearing shadow

Indeed, a person who understands will not be deceived by all that.

Abu atTaiyib al-Mutanabbi recites this ballad,

وَكَمْ مَنْ يَعْشِقُ الدُّنْيَا قَدِيمًا \* وَلَكِنْ لَا سَيِّلَ إِلَى الْوَصَالِ

Then many people dream of worldly lives,

But they found no way to achieve that desired status.

نَصِيبُكَ فِي حَيَاةِكَ مِنْ حَيْبَنِكَ \* نَصِيبُكَ فِي حَيَاةِكَ مِنْ حَيَاتِكَ

Like your fate in your life relations with loved ones.

Or like your fate in a dream you experience in sleep.

Luqman, peace be upon him, said, “He who sells this world for the next profits both, but he who sells the Hereafter for this world loses both.” Thus he counselled his son, “This world is like a deep-sea where many people have drowned, so you should furnish your ship sailing on it with the fear of Allah [*taqwa*], fill its belly with light of faith [*imam*], let her sail be reliance to Allah [*tawakkal*], that perhaps you may be saved, and still I think you may not.”

Malik bin Dinar, may Allah mercy be upon him, said, “When the body is ill, neither food and beverage nor sleep and rest benefits it. The heart is similar; if the love of this world overcomes it, it benefits not from any counselling.” Then he said to his companions, “I shall invoke, and you say ‘Amen’! “O Allah! Allow nothing of this world into the house of Malik, neither little nor much!”

When Malik went out of his house, he locked its door with a rope and said, “Were it not for the dogs, I would have left it open.” He often said that a servant of Allah would not achieve the status of truthfulness [*as-Siddiqin*]<sup>1</sup> until he let his wife be a widow and he sleeps in the dog’s kernel.

Once Malik passed by a man planting a date palm shoot. He remained away from the area for a while then after some time.

<sup>1</sup> This is the state of those who are truthful in their divine worship with Allah, the Exalted, his devotion to Allah is such that he has no time or desire for his wife.

Malik passed by the same place again, and the shoot had grown and fruits. He inquired about the man and was told that he had died then Malik narrated,

فَمَا تَهْوِيْلُ قَبْلَ الْأَمْلِ \* مُؤْمِلُ دُنْيَا لِيَتَقَى لَهُ

The man hoped that the world would remain with him

Unfortunately, he who hoped died before his hope

يُرِّي فَسِيلًا وَيُعْنِي بِهِ \* فَعَاشَ الْفَسِيلُ وَمَاتَ الرَّجُلُ

He planted a palm shoot and gave it his careful attention

The sprout grew big; however, the man died not having seen it.

Abul Atahiyah recited,

كَمْ عَامِرٌ ذَارًا لِيَسْكُنْ طِلَّهَا \* سَكَنَ الْقُبُورَ وَدَارَهُ لَمْ يَسْكُنْ

How many people built a house to be in its shade, in the end,

Lived in the grave for he did not get to live in the house he built.

A historic recording mentioned that the phrase “*La ilaha illAllah*” protects those who recite it while they do not trade their religion for this world, and if their deeds are such, then when they say it, Allah will say, “You lie! You do not mean it in truth!”

Some of our predecessors invoked, “O You who keeps the sky from falling upon the earth, except with His permission keep this world away from me!”

Once Ibrahim bin Adham came before the Khalifah al-Mansur. The latter asked him, “O Ibrahim, what do you have to say?” He recited,

نُرْفَعُ دُنْيَا نَا بِتَمْزِيقِ دِينِنَا \* فَلَا دِينُنَا يَبْقَى وَلَا مَا نُرْفَعُ

We patch up our world by tearing our religion into pieces.

In the end, neither religion remains, nor what we are patching.

A man said to Dawud al-Tai’iy, “Counsel me!” Dawud replied, “Fast from the world and break your fast with the Hereafter, and run away from people as you would from a lion!”

Another man saw Dawud in a dream, running and asked him, “O Abu Sulaiman<sup>1</sup> what’s happening with you?” He replied, “Just now I escaped from prison!” When the man awake, he was told, “Dawud al-Tai’iy has died!”

Al-Fudayl bin Iyad, may Allah’s mercy be upon him, said, “All evil gathered in a house, the key for it is a desire for this world, and all good gathered in a house, the key for it is a renunciation of the world.”

Then he said, “Had the world been made of perishable, gold and the Hereafter of permanent clay, we should have preferred permanent clay to perishable gold. What, then, when the world is temporary clay and the Hereafter permanent gold?”

He said, moreover, “Were this world to be brought to me and were it to be said, “Take it, licitly, with no reckoning!” I would have protected myself from its filth as one of you protects himself from a carcass he passes lest it soils his clothes.”

Imam al-Shafi’i, may Allah’s mercy be upon him, said, “If in the market this world is for sale, I will not buy it even if it cost a loaf of bread, for all the troubles it contains.”

Then he recited this ballad,

وَمَنْ يَجْهَلُ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنِّي طَعَمْتُهَا \* وَسِيقَ إِلَيْنَا عَذْبُهَا وَعَذَابُهَا

Now who is unaware of this world for indeed I tasted it

That leads us to eat and aware of its sweetness and bitterness

فَلَمَنْ أَرَهَا إِلَّا غُرُورًا وَبَاطِلًا \* كَمَا لَاحَ فِي ظَهِيرِ الْفَلَاثَةِ سَرَابُهَا

I saw nothing of her except deception and false perceptions

Just as if an appearance emerges in the sight of a wild mirage

وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا جِيْفَةٌ مُسْتَحِيلَةٌ \* عَيْنَهَا كَلَابٌ هَمْهُنَّ اجْنَدَابُهَا

And it is nothing but an inconceivable smelly carcass.

The dogs pound on it dragging it back and fore aimlessly.

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Sulaiman is the nick name for Dawud al-Tai’iy.

فَإِنْ تَحْتَبِّهَا عِشْتَ سِلْمًا لِأَهْلِهَا \* وَإِنْ تَجْتَذِبُهَا جَادَبْتَكَ كِلَابُهَا

For indeed keeping away from it is safe from its conditions.

For if you are allure to it, its wild dogs will pounce on you.

Bishr ibn al-Harith, may Allah's mercy be upon him, said, "Whoever asks his Lord for this world then he can expect to stand for an extended period before Him, to be judged that is he can expect to be questioned for a long period on the Day of Judgment.

Then Bishr recited this poem,

أَقْسِمُ بِاللَّهِ لَرَضْخُ النَّوْيِ \* وَشُرْبُ مَاءِ الْقُلْبِ الْمَالِحِةِ

I swear by Allah that to consume fallen dates

And to drink water from a salted well,

أَحْسَنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ حِرْصِهِ \* وَمِنْ سُؤَالِ الْأَوْجُهِ الْكَالِحِ

That is better for the believer than being greedy

And begging from people whose faces will frown

مُعْتَدِطًا بِالصَّفْقَةِ الرَّابِحِهِ \* فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ تَكُونْ ذَا غَنِيًّا

So ask from Allah, and you will be rich

And happy with the delightful rewards of the hereafter

أَيْمَانُ عَزٌّ وَالْتُّقَىٰ سُورَدَدِهِ \* وَرَغْبَةُ النَّفْسِ لَهَا فَاضِحَةٌ

Renouncing the world is the final state, then fear and Mindful of duties to Allah will prevail. While if the self loves the world, it will only bring personal difficulties and troubles

مُنْ كَانَتِ الدُّنْيَا لَهُ بَرَّةً \* فَإِنَّهَا يَوْمًا لَهُ ذَابِحَةٌ

Those who found the world to be kind and pleasing

Indeed, he will find his final day extremely torturous.

Bishr ibn al-Harith used to serenade a ballad about some primordial predecessors [salaf saleh], may Allah be pleased with them,

مُكْرِمُ الدُّنْيَا مُهَانٌ \* مُسْتَدِلٌ فِي الْقِيَامَهِ

Those that honour and value the world will be despised

Thus humiliated during the Day of Judgment

فَلَهُ ثَمَّ كَرَامَهُ \* وَالَّذِي هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ

While those whose condition is despicable in the world  
Then he will be honour beyond his imagination.

Darrar bin Damra said, describing Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, “He felt estranged from the world and its beauty, and was intimate and at peace with the night when darkness engulfs the surrounding. I bear witness that I saw him once when the night had fallen, and the stars had risen, wakeful in his retreat, like a man that had been stung, restless as though wounded, weeping sorrowfully, holding his beard, and saying, “O world! Deceive other than me! Is it for me that you beautify yourself? Is it for me that you manifest yourself? I have divorced you thrice; there can be no return, for your span is short, your worth insignificant, and your danger great! Ah! the scarcity of provisions, the distance of the journey, and the estrangement of travelling!” ”

One of the pious predecessors said, “Pity the sons of Adam; for he is satisfied with a place whereby what is permissible [halal] yet leads to accountable, and whatever is illicit [haram] leads to torment. When he takes it permissibly, he has to account for its pleasure, and if he takes it illicitly, he suffers tormented for it.”

Al-Ma’mun, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “There is none that could describe the world as well and as accurate like that characterised by al-Hasan bin Hani’ in his poem which versed as

إِذَا امْتَحَنَ الدُّنْيَا لَيْبَ تَكْشَفَتْ \* لَهُ عَنْ عَدُوٍّ فِي ثِيَابِ صَدِيقٍ

Whenever those with understanding test the world

It is exposed to him as an enemy camouflage is a friendly attire.

وَمَا النَّاسُ إِلَّا هَالِكُ وَابْنُ هَالِكٍ \* وَذُو نَسَبٍ فِي الْهَالِكِينَ عَرِيقٌ

Is man nothing than destructible and sons of the destructible race

Whose descendants came from the deep-rooted destroyed nation.

Yahya bin Mu’adh, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Let your sight upon this world be a lesson, your renunciation of it a choice, and your taking from it as a basic necessity.”

Then he, may Allah have mercy on him also said, “I have abandoned this world because of its excessive troubles, its lack of sufficiency, the speed with which it destroys and vanishes, and the resentful envy of the companions it gives you.”

He also advised, “This world is the Iblis’s market place. Whoever buys anything from it, Satan follows him until he repossesses it.” “The world from beginning to its end is not worth an hour’s grief, what more so with a lifetime of grief and still only a small share of it?”

Some of the righteous recited a ballad,

وَمَنْ يَحْمِدِ الدُّنْيَا لِيَعْشِيْ يَسْرُهُ \* فَسَوْفَ لَعْمَرِيْ عَنْ قَرِيبٍ يَلُومُهَا

Whoever praises the world for happiness in living in it!

Then by my age, sooner or later he will curse and swear at it!

إِذَا أَذْبَرْتُ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمَرْءِ حَسْرَةً \* وَإِنْ أَفْبَلْتُ كَانَتْ كَثِيرًا هُمُومُهَا

If the world turns its back to the man, then it will regret

If it presents itself, then there are many worries and concerned

Caliph Harun al-Rashid asked for a drink of water, and it was brought to him. Ibn al-Sammak was with him, so he asked him, “Were you to be prevented from drinking this water, would you buy it with your kingdom?” He answered, “Yes!” He then said, “Vile is a world that is not worth a drink of water!”

One of the predecessors who had lived very long was asked to describe the world. He said, “A house with two doors; I entered through one of its doors and exited through the other. And I saw years of affliction and years of affluence, newborn babies being born and dying men dying; were it not for the newborn none would remain, were it not for the dead the world will not be able to contain them.”

Once a wise man said, “This world is but ruin; more ruined is the heart of he who lives to strive for it. The Hereafter is flourishing and more flourishing in the heart of he who strives for it.”

Another wise man was asked, “Who does this world belongs to?” He answered, “To him who abandons it.” They asked, “Then who does the Hereafter belong to?” He explained, “To him, who seeks it.”

An ascetic was asked, "How do you perceive this world?" He answered, "The world-worn out the body, and yet hopes are ever renewed, and death is ever approaching while aspiration ever receding." They asked, "How about its people?" He answered, "He who has possessed it is stressed while he who has missed it is in distress." And by Allah, well done for those who narrated this ballad,

أَرَى الدُّنْيَا لِمَنْ هِيِ فِي يَدِيهِ      \*      عَذَابًا كُلَّمَا كَثُرَتْ عَلَيْهِ

I see the world as one in whose hands is burning charcoal,

The torture is ever-increasing for him as long as he holds on to it.

ثُمَّئُونَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ لَهَا بِصِغْرٍ      \*      وَثُكْرِمُ كُلَّمَا هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ

Respectable people are fascinated by its charm to become despise.

While all those who appropriately despise it become an honour.

إِذَا اسْتَغْنَيْتَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَدَعْهُ      \*      وَحْدَ مَا أَنْتَ مُحْتَاجٌ إِلَيْهِ

If you do not need anything from it, then leave it.

While taking only the basic of what you need from it.

Imam al-Ghazali, the Proof of Islam, says in his *Ihya Ulumiddin*, "This world is Allah's enemy, that of His saints, and that of His enemies.

As for being Allah's enemies, the world acts as an obstruction to the right path of Allah's servants, and this is why He has not looked at it since He created it.

As for being an enemy to Allah's saints, the world adorns itself for them, overwhelming them with its beauty and freshness, so that they have to bear the bitterness of patience in resisting it.

As for being an enemy to Allah's enemies, the world allures them with its cunning and stratagems, catching them in its net, so that they trust in it and depend on it.

It will let them down at their time of greatest need so that they reap of it is severe grief. Then it will deprive these people of happiness forever; they are sorry to leave it and cry for help against it ruses, but no support is forthcoming, on the contrary, it is said to them,

اَخْسَئُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ.

“Be ye driven into it with ignominy! And speak ye not to Me!”<sup>1</sup>

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ، فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُصَرُّونَ.

“These are the people who buy the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter: their penalty shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped.”<sup>2</sup>

We end this collection, for the verses, hadiths and historical records concerning this subject are more numerous than to be counted or exhausted. That which we have quoted should be sufficient, a lesson for he who reflects and a reminder for he who remembers.

وَمَا يَنَذَّكُرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ.

“But only those receive admonition who turn to Allah.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 23 al-Mu'minun Verse 108.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 86.

<sup>3</sup> Surah 40 Ghaafir Verse 13.

## Epilogue

We begin this epilogue by recalling some of the utterances of the leader of ascetics [*zuhud*], Allah's proof against them, Isa (Jesus), the son of Mariam (Mary) and may upon our prophet and him be the best of blessings.

Isa (Jesus) may peace be upon him said, "The world is a bridge, so cross it, do not build it! O seeker of this world, whoever wishes to use it righteously, if you leave it, it is more righteous. The love of this world and that of the Hereafter cannot be united in the believing heart, just as water and fire cannot be united in a single vessel."

And Isa (Jesus) may peace be upon him also said, "The world is but whatever that exist before you, consumed by both the righteous and depraved. The Hereafter is the true promise whereby the judgment belongs to an All-Powerful King."

He may peace and blessings upon him said, "Do not take this world for a lord, then it may not take you for slaves. Treasure your treasures with He who will not lose, for indeed, the owners' of worldly treasures are constantly worried it will be stricken by calamity while he who has Allah's treasures has no fear it will be stricken calamity."

Once he, may peace and blessings be upon him said, "My condiments is hunger, my emblem is fear, my clothing is raw wool, my prayer in winter is for the sun to rise, my lamp is the moon, my riding mount is my two feet, my food and fruits are what the earth grows, I sleep by night possessing nothing and awake in the morning possessing nothing, yet I see none on earth richer than me."

And he, upon him blessings and peace said, “I wonder at he who is forgetful but not forgotten<sup>1</sup> he who hopes for this world when death is seeking him, and he who builds a palace when the grave shall be his dwelling. The fear of Allah and the love of Paradise separate one from the beauties of this world and grant him patience in hardship. And indeed, eating barley and sleeping on refuse heaps with the dogs is a small price for paradise.”

Once he said, “O Assembly of Disciples! I have turned the world upside down on its face for you, so do not revive it after I am gone!” Then they asked him, “How is it that you can walk on water but we cannot?” He asked them, “How do you value the *dinar* and the *dirham*?” They replied, “One is a higher value than the other!” He then said, “To me, they are of no value, just like pebbles and dust!”

Once he rested his head on a stone. Satan [*Iblis*] came to him and said, “O Isa [Jesus]! You have found comfort in this world!” So he threw the stone at him and said, “I do not have anything of it other than this (stone)! ”

On another occasion, he was exposed to heavy rain, with lightning and thunder. He saw a tent and headed towards it, but found a woman there and so departed. Then he saw a cave and went to it, but a lion was there. Then he invoked, “O Lord! You have provided refuge to each of these, but to me, You give no refuge!” Later Allah revealed to him, “Your refuge is in the resting place of My mercy. I shall give you thousands of beautiful companions [*huril ains*]<sup>2</sup> to marry and I shall feed the people of the Garden thousands of years for your wedding.”

And he, upon him blessings and peace said, “O son of Adam! If what you desire from this world is what should suffice you, a little would suffice you, but if you wish more than your sufficiency, the world as a whole will not suffice you.

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<sup>1</sup> The servant who forgets Allah, the Exalted and the Hereafter but never forgotten by Allah, the Most Merciful and Most Forgiving and the Ever-Watchful.

<sup>2</sup> Companions or spouse well-matched, lovely eyed, pure beings of heavenly delights of paradise mystic and yet an ecstatic awareness of Allah the Magnificent.

Do not ruin yourselves by pursuing this world. Control your ego by abandoning what the world contains, for you have entered it naked and naked will you leave it. Ask Allah for provision one day at a time and know that Allah has made this worldly life brief, what remains of it, is a brief spell of what was already brief. Furthermore, what was limpid of it were already drunk, and only the turbidity remains. And know that this world is a dwelling of punishment and illusion, so be in it as a man nursing his wound. He patiently endures the pain of medicine, hoping for healing and freedom from illness. Let not what you see of this world lure you away from the Hereafter that you do not understand!"

And he upon him be blessings and peace said, "Your situation is strange. You work and strive for this world, in which your provisions [*risq*] are provided to you without labour, and yet you do not work and labour for the Hereafter, whereby you will not be provided for except by striving."

The world presented itself to him (Isa, peace be upon him) as an elaborately adorned woman. He then asked her, "Do you have a husband?" She answered, "I have many husbands!" He asked, "Have they all divorced you, or died and left you or did you killed them all?" She answered, "I killed them all!" He asked her, "Did you grieve over any of them?" She replied, "They grieve over me, but I do not grieve over them. They weep over me, but I do not weep over them!" He said, "Strange how your remaining husbands do not learn from your past husbands!"

Once Isa [Jesus] may peace be upon him, passed by a group who were all worshipping Allah, except one who was asleep. He asked, "O you!" Arise and worship your Allah with your companions!" He replied, "I have worshipped Him better than all their worship; I have renounced the world!" He, (Isa) may peace be upon him, then, said, "Sleep contentedly, for you have outstripped the worshippers!"

He, blessings and peace be upon him, was asked about the saints of Allah, who "have no fear upon them, nor do they grieve," so he replied, "They are those who look at the inward or hidden aspect of

this world, while people look at its outward appearance. They concentrate on what is to come after the world, while people focus on what is in it now. They destroy that which they fear might ruin them and abandon the actions that which they know will leave them.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever contingent of worldly pleasures that come along, they refuse. Whatever deceitful eminence (like status in society, high position or promotions) that comes to them, they turn down. In their eyes, this world is worn out there is nothing to renew it, it is in ruin among them, but they do not rebuild it; it is dead in their hearts, but they do not revive it.

On the contrary, they demolish the worldly lives to build their lives to come. They wish to sell it to buy what is to remain their eternally. They saw those people who were engulfed by the worldly affairs were unconscious of it when danger is all around them. Thus they will not be at peace and safe until they achieve all that they hope for and they will not be worry and fearful other than what they fear.

## The End

The Epilogue brings to completion “A Treaties of Mutual Reminding for Loving Brothers amongst the People of Goodness and Religion”.

I have only entitled it this way because it was written for mutual reminding amongst them.

May Allah inspire them and us with guidance and protect us from the evil in ourselves.

Everything quoted in this treatise, whether Prophetic or other traditions, was taken from authentic, authoritative books. The hadiths

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<sup>1</sup> They removed worldly issues that may influence or deviate them from the straight path and deeds that are of no benefit to them for the Hereafter.

quoted in conclusion are about twenty in number, but by omitting to separate them from each other, they seemed to be four or five.<sup>1</sup>

I did this believing it would be briefer and more likely to produce the desired effect.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْحَسِيرُ. يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْجُّ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ الرَّحِيمُ الْغَفُورُ.

“Praise and thanks belong to Allah, to Whom belong all things in the heavens and on earth: to Him be Praise and Thanks in the Hereafter: and He is Full of Wisdom, acquainted with all things. He knows all that goes into the earth, and all that comes out thereof; all that comes down from the sky and all that ascends to it, and He is the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving.”<sup>2</sup>

And may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, his family and companions until the Day of Resurrection and Arising, and may peace be upon the messengers, and praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Universes.

Dictation of this treatise was completed on Sunday, before noon, the first day of Jumada al-Awwal, a month of the year 1069 of the prophet emigration, may the best of blessings and peace be upon him.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Universes.

<sup>1</sup> We have actually separated them in this translation.

<sup>2</sup> Surah 34 Saba Verses 1-2.

# Notes